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A NEW BASIS  
OF  
BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY.

By JOHN S. FARMER.

CANON WILBERFORCE

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# SUPERIOR EDITION OF A NEW BASIS OF BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY.

BY JOHN S. FARMER.

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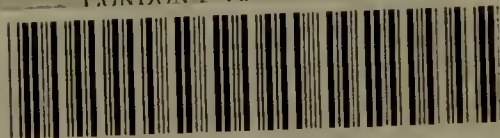
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# NEW BASIS OF BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY.

BY

JOHN S. FARMER.

"OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MOST GLORIOUS LIGHT."

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON: E. W. ALLEN, 4 AVE MARIA LANE, E.C.,

AND

OFFICE OF "PSYCHOLOGICAL REVIEW,"

4 NEW BRIDGE STREET, LUDGATE CIRCUS, E.C.

1882.

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## PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

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My object in writing the following pages has mainly been to present an outline of the new basis of belief which, it appears to me, Spiritualism is now-a-days furnishing to the world. The influence which it is exercising on modern life and thought is not the least important among the liberalising tendencies of the age. As a movement, Spiritualism lives and grows, and, in spite of the vehement opposition which, until lately, was accorded it by a large section of the cultivated classes, it is rapidly pushing its way to the front, and signs are not wanting that, in the near future, its influence will be widely felt, not only in the social, but also in a more marked degree in the religious life of our times.

I have endeavoured to show that the grounds of its rejection on the one hand by materialistic science, and the fear with which it is regarded on the other by the popular faith, are alike void, even of a show of reason; that Spiritualism is the handmaid of both—that standing midway between the opposing schools, it gives to the one a scientific basis for the divine things of old, whilst it restores to the other the much needed evidence of its expressed faith in the duality and continuity of life. If true, the importance of the question to the Christian world cannot be over-rated, seeing that it modifies, and, in many instances, upsets altogether the popular views with regard to life here and hereafter. I have based my argument on the assumption that Spiritual phenomena do not require further proof. They have been examined and found to be true by many witnesses, whose intelligence and veracity cannot be questioned, and if we deny such evidence, we must be prepared to reject human testimony altogether. And yet it is more than probable that the cumulative testimony of the past will fail to convince those who have not examined for themselves. This is rightly so. But so sure am I of my facts, that I can safely affirm that the only possible result of patient and persevering investigation, is a recognition of the reality of the phenomena, and the acceptance of the theory which attributes the same to the agency of disembodied human spirits as the only rational solution of the facts. I have aimed at little more than suggesting certain lines of thought with relation to my subject which seemed to me to commend themselves to the religious world, and to remove a misapprehension which, unfortunately, has hitherto marred its usefulness. I have not written for those whose faith is strong, or to whom doubt has never come, but rather to the many whose minds have been unsettled by the critical thought of the day, and whose name is legion. If what I have written induces a spirit of re-enquiry in any sincere seeker after truth, who has found the present bases of belief wanting, and thereby leads him back again to a more rational faith, my work will not have been in vain. That it may be the means of banishing unbelief, and restoring faith to not a few, is the earnest desire of the author.

LONDON, *New Year's Day*, 1839.

## PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

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THE term "Spiritualism," owing in a measure to a merely superficial knowledge of the subject, and in a much greater degree to a total ignorance of its true aims and tendencies, is associated in the public estimation only with the grossest forms of chicanery, fraud, and credulity, and it is no wonder that, under such impressions as these, nothing but feelings of disgust are generated in the minds of right-thinking people. So deep-rooted are these feelings and prejudices, and so profound the ignorance which obtains of the higher and true aspects of the question, that everything bearing the name of Spiritualism is classed under one category, and at once relegated to the limbo of imposture and credulity. As well, and with as much show of reason, might all that passes under the name of Christianity, no matter how divergent from the life and spirit of its founder, be classified together. True there is fraud, and deceit, and jealousies, and recriminations amongst those who call themselves Spiritualists, but are they the only section of society in which these traits of our baser nature appear? One would not for an instant think of condemning all forms of Christian faith and worship because some of its followers fall short of their profession, and it is only a matter of justice that Spiritualism should receive similar consideration. Just as there is Christianity and Christianity, so there is Spiritualism and Spiritualism—the one silly and unclean, and only degrading in its form and tendency; the other (and this is the side of which the world knows but little) tending only to uplift humanity, body and soul. As will be seen on perusal of these pages, its primary aim is to furnish scientific evidence of the truths of Christianity, the need of which is felt by so many, and whose feelings are well expressed in the following observation once made by the late George Eliot:—"Deism seems to me the most incoherent of systems, but to Christianity I feel no objection but its want of evidence." It is this evidence that Spiritualism claims to supply.

I, therefore, again send it forth to tell of, and point out the evidence which exists for that future existence which the Christ came to demonstrate by His life, and death, and resurrection. It has already received commendation from not a few, and its success has at any rate been such that I am enabled to issue the second edition at a little more than half the price of the first. My only desire is that it may thereby have a far wider sphere of usefulness.

LONDON, *March*, 1881.



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## NOTICE TO ENQUIRERS.

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THOSE who are interested in and desire to know more of the subject of which this Pamphlet treats, are directed to the *Psychological Review*, a Monthly Magazine devoted to Spiritualism in its higher aspects. See Prospectus on back page of Cover, and Order Form in Advertisement pages.



# A NEW BASIS OF BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY.

## INTRODUCTION.

It may, I think, fairly be affirmed that upon no other branch of human knowledge does there obtain in popular estimation such inadequate, mischievous, and untruthful views as upon the subject of the mysterious phenomena included under the general appellation of Modern Spiritualism. Probably there is no other question of greater import and interest to the minds of men, for whatever may be the conclusion to which we are led concerning the nature and origin of Spiritual phenomena, it is a fact that the movement itself is in the world, and that, for weal or woe, it is exercising a most potent and subtle influence, being either a heaven-sent messenger, bringing glad tidings from beyond the tomb of the mighty army of the dead—thus solving the problem of man's immortality—or it is the most stupendous delusion which has ever cursed humanity.

As it is not unlikely that this book will fall into the hands of some who may not even know what is meant by the term "Spiritualism," it will not be altogether out of place for me to preface my subject with some account of the rise and progress of the movement, together with a brief *resumé* of its facts and theories; and even amongst those to whom its distinctive appellation is familiar, there exists such inadequate ideas as to what constitutes Modern Spiritualism, that it is probable such a description will not be useless or superfluous.

The fundamental principle of Modern Spiritualism is, that the existence of man after death is palpably demonstrated (and that beyond the shadow of a doubt) by certain abnormal phenomena, which, though observed and noted from time to time in the past, have never previously been scientifically examined or recognised as affording phenomenal evidences of a life to come.

Modern Spiritualism, distinctively as such, was initiated by the action of a child, by name Kate Fox. The story of the Hydesville disturbances is too well known to require a detailed account here. Briefly, however, it runs as follows:—The family of David Fox, at Hydesville, N. Y., were disturbed by a certain inexplicable knocking in the beginning of the year 1848. His little girl, Kate, aroused from her evening slumber by the noise and the alarm of the family, asked the unknown cause of the sounds to give a certain number of raps. It did so; and "Oh, mother!" the little girl exclaimed, "it hears what I say; it knows what I tell it; for it has rapped the number of times I asked it!"

Here was a discovery: the phenomena had an intelligent cause!

A similar intelligence had been manifested by the phenomena investigated by the Rev. Joseph Glanvil, at Tedworth, in 1661, and by those which attracted the attention of the Wesley Family, in Lincolnshire, in 1716; but the hint was not acted on, and the manifestations ended in the families where they originated. The discovery, when made by Kate Fox, however, was productive of consequences that can be only estimated by the growth and future influence of Modern Spiritualism.

In this case the inquiry was followed up, and it soon became evident that an organised attempt was being made by the denizens of the spirit world to open up a method of communication with mankind. On one occasion it was suggested that the alphabet should be called over to see if the sounds would respond to the required letters, and so spell out a communication. A shower of raps followed, as if to say, "Yes, that is what we want!" The first message so given was, "We are all your dear friends and relations." Previous to the spiritual telegraph thus commenced, the only mode of communication had been by asking questions, one rap being understood as an answer in the negative, three in the affirmative, and two doubtful, so that the answer could not then be given. It was now asked how a signal should be given when the alphabet was required. This was responded to by five strokes, which were henceforth understood as a call for the alphabet, and so a code of signals was instituted.

Circles for investigation were now everywhere formed; and not only were the rappings obtained, but new phases of these strange phenomena were constantly developed.

Dr. Nichols, in his "Forty Years of American Life," tells us that but a very short time elapsed before there were, in various places, many miles apart, scores and hundreds of so-called mediums, and a variety of manifestations.

With many there were raps and knocks, answering questions, and spelling out messages. In other cases, tables rising up on two legs, pounded on the floor their revelations. Dials were made with moveable hands, which pointed out letters, and answered questions without apparent human aid. The hands of mediums acting convulsively, and as they averred, without volition, wrote things apparently beyond their knowledge. Their writings were sometimes made upside down, or reversed, so as only to be read through the paper, or in a mirror. Some wrote, with both hands at a time, different messages, without, as they said, being conscious of either. There were speaking mediums, who declared themselves to be merely passive instruments of the spirits. Some represented most faithfully, it was said, the actions, voices, and appearance of persons long dead, and whom they had never seen. There were drawing mediums, who, blindfolded, drew portraits, said to be likenesses of deceased persons whom they had never seen. To draw a portrait blindfolded would be no easy matter.—but these were done with a marvellous rapidity, the ordinary work of hours being done in a few minutes. Sometimes the names of deceased persons and short messages appeared in raised red lines upon the skin of the medium. Ponderous bodies, as heavy dining tables and pianofortes, were raised from the floor, falling again with a crash and jar. Tables,

on which several persons were seated, were in like manner raised into the air by some invisible force, contrary to supposed laws of gravitation. Writings and pictures were produced without visible hands. Persons were touched by invisible and sometimes visible hands. Various musical instruments were played upon without visible agency. Voices were heard which purported to be those of spirits. In a word, over a vast extent of country, from east to west, these phenomena existed in hundreds of places, and were witnessed by many thousands of people, numbers of whom were of the highest credibility, and the mass of those persons whose testimony no one would think of impeaching in a trial of life and death.

Many theories were invented to explain these phenomena, which are for the most part obsolete or forgotten. Each theory generally began by exploding its predecessor, and was in turn exploded by its next successor. No sooner was a theory invented to explain one class of facts than another sprang up for which it made no provision, and to which it was manifestly inadequate. Not only did the flame spread, but sometimes the extinguishers caught fire, and those who were at first its opponents ended as its advocates. The most obdurate materialists became convinced of a Future Life by the experimental evidence Spiritualism supplied.

From that time until now the movement has gone on increasing in power and stability. Other phases of phenomena have been witnessed, all tending to one end—a demonstration of the reality of a future life. It has been investigated by men in every grade and station of society; by lawyers, doctors, divines, and men of science, most of whom “came to scoff, but remained to pray;” and it is a curious fact, that no one who has thoroughly investigated the subject has long remained in doubt as to the reality of the phenomena in question. There have been few if any recantations. Professor Alfred Russell Wallace asserts, that after much reading and inquiry, he can find no example of a man who, having acquired a good personal knowledge of all the chief phases of the phenomena, has subsequently come to disbelieve in their reality. If the “explanations” and “exposures” were good for anything, or if it were an imposture to expose or a delusion to explain, this could not be the case, because there are numbers of men who have become convinced of the facts, but who have not accepted the theory of Spiritualism. These are for the most part in an uncomfortable and unsettled frame of mind, and would gladly welcome an explanation which really explained everything; but they find it not.

That these phenomena do occur, under conditions which admit of no possibility of deception, is a fact which has been and can be attested by those who care to devote the necessary time and trouble to the investigation. The only question, therefore, is whether the intelligence operating in these manifestations is what it professes to be, viz., the spirits of those who have once lived on earth.

The argument for the spiritual hypothesis has been summed up by Dr. Sexton in the following twelve propositions:—

1. The phenomena cannot result from the blind forces of nature, because they are unmistakably controlled by intelligence.

2. The intelligence is not that of the medium, nor of any person in the circle, since it is frequently given through agencies which they have no means of controlling, and has, in thousands of cases, evinced a knowledge not possessed by any of them, often replying to questions directly in opposition to the current of all their thoughts.

3. There can be no source of intelligence but that of conscious, thinking beings.

4. As the intelligence displayed in the spirit-circle springs from conscious beings, and these not forming a part of the sitters, they must either be outside the circle, or present at it in some other than the ordinary material form which distinguishes the sitters.

5. They cannot be persons in the ordinary condition of material existence outside the circle, for they hold converse with, and even read the thoughts of, those who are present there, with no means of communication beyond the walls of the house in which they may be sitting.

6. There must, then, be conscious, thinking, intelligent beings present in the circle, who do not belong to the number of the sitters.

7. The sitters comprise all the persons present in the material condition in which human beings are met with here, therefore there must be other intelligent existences present in some other than the ordinary material form.

8. There must, then, be spiritual existences of some kind or other.

9. As they are conscious, intelligent, thinking beings, capable of holding intercourse with us, and of communicating their ideas to us, they have the power of informing us who and what they are.

10. They all declare, in unmistakable language, that they are the spirits of our deceased friends and fellow-creatures, who once lived here in the flesh as we do now.

11. Not only do they state this unanimously—for there is no difference of opinion amongst them on that score—but they give irrefragable proofs that they are what they profess to be.

12. These proofs are to be obtained by any one who will take the trouble to seek for them.

These facts appear to me to prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that Spiritualism is true, and that man is the heir of immortality. Thus is the great problem solved that has forced itself in all ages and in every clime upon the attention of mankind.

"One question more than others all  
From thoughtful minds implores reply;  
It is, as breathed from star and pall,  
What fate awaits us when we die?"

There are other theories which have been put forward in explanation—such as the "Psychic Force" of Sergeant Cox. and the "Unconscious Cerebration" of Professor Carpenter—but, though possibly explaining some of the facts, they fail to cover all; or, if they do, they make a far greater demand upon our imagination than does the Spiritualistic theory. For a detailed discussion of these views the reader is referred to the published works of Messrs Crookes and Wallace.



The phenomena may be broadly divided into two classes—physical and mental; and though the latter are generally of very little use for convincing sceptics, yet they are so intimately connected with the former, and so often interwoven with them, that, as Mr. Wallace points out, no one who has sufficient experience to satisfy him of the reality of the physical series, fails to see that the mental phenomena form part of the general system, and are dependent on the same agencies. I herewith give Mr. Wallace's classification of the phenomena *in extenso*. "They may," he says, "be grouped provisionally, as Physical, or those in which material objects are acted on, or apparently material bodies produced; and Mental, or those which consist in the exhibition by the medium of powers or faculties not possessed in the normal state."

The principal physical phenomena are the following:—

1. *Simple Physical Phenomena*.—Producing sounds of all kinds, from a delicate tick to blows like those of a heavy sledge-hammer. Altering the weight of bodies. Moving bodies without human agency. Raising bodies into the air. Conveying bodies to a distance out of and into closed rooms. Releasing mediums from every description of bonds, even from welded iron rings, as has happened in America.

2. *Chemical*.—Preserving from the effects of fire.

3. *Direct Writing and Drawing*.—Producing writing or drawing on marked papers, placed in such positions that no human hand (or foot) can touch them. Sometimes, visibly to the spectators, a pencil rising up and writing or drawing apparently by itself. Some of the drawings in many colours have been produced on marked paper in from ten to twenty seconds, and the colours found wet. (See Mr. Coleman's evidence, in "Dialectical Report," p. 143, confirmed by Lord Borthwick, p. 150.) Mr. Thomas Slater, of 136 Euston Road, is now obtaining communications in the following manner:—A bit of slate pencil, an eighth of an inch long, is laid on a table; a clean slate is laid over this, in a well lighted room; the sound of writing is then heard, and in a few minutes a communication of considerable length is found distinctly written. At other times the slate is held between himself and another person, their other hands being joined. Some of these communications are philosophical discussions on the nature of spirit and matter, supporting the usual spiritual theory on this subject.

4. *Musical Phenomena*.—Musical instruments, of various kinds, played without human agency, from a hand-bell to a closed piano. With some mediums, and where the conditions are favourable, original musical compositions of a very high character are produced. This occurs with Mr. Home.

5. *Spiritual Forms*.—These are either luminous appearances, sparks, stars, globes of light, luminous clouds, &c.; or hands, faces, or entire human figures, generally covered with flowing drapery, except a portion of the face and hands. The human forms are often capable of working solid objects, and are both visible and tangible to all present. In other cases they are only visible to seers, but when this is the case it sometimes happens that the seer describes the figure as lifting a flower or a

pen, and others present see the flower or the pen apparently move by itself. In some cases they speak distinctly; in others the voice is heard by all, the form only seen by the medium. The flowing robes of these forms have in some cases been examined, and pieces cut off, which have in a short time melted away. Flowers are also brought, some of which fade away and vanish; others are real, and can be kept indefinitely. It must not be concluded that any of the forms are actual spirits; they are probably only temporary forms produced by spirits for purposes of test, or of recognition by their friends. This is the account invariably given of them by communications obtained in various ways; so that the objection once thought to be so crushing—that there can be no “ghosts” of clothes, armour, or walking-sticks—ceases to have any weight.

6. *Spiritual Photographs*.—These demonstrate by a purely physical experiment the trustworthiness of the preceding class of observations.

We now come to the mental phenomena, of which the following are the chief:—

1. *Automatic Writing*.—The medium writes involuntarily, sometimes in a state of trance, and often matter which he is not thinking about, does not expect, and does not like. Occasionally definite and correct information is given of facts of which the medium has not, nor ever had, any knowledge. Sometimes future events are accurately predicted. The writing takes place either by the hand or through a planchette. Often the hand-writing changes. Sometimes it is written backwards; sometimes in languages the medium does not understand.

2. *Seeing, or Clairvoyance and Clairaudience*.—This is of various kinds. Some mediums see the forms of deceased persons unknown to them, and describe their peculiarities so minutely that their friends at once recognise them. They often hear voices, through which they obtain names, date, and place, connected with the individuals so described. Others read sealed letters in any language, and write appropriate answers.

3. *Trance-Speaking*.—The medium goes into a more or less unconscious state, and then speaks, often on matters and in a style beyond his own capacities. Of these, Serjeant Cox—no mean judge on a matter of literary style—says, “I have heard an uneducated barman, when in a state of trance, maintain a dialogue with a party of philosophers on ‘Reason and Foreknowledge, Will and Fate,’ and hold his own against them, I have put to him the most difficult questions in psychology, and received answers, always thoughtful, often full of wisdom, and invariably conveyed in choice and elegant language. Nevertheless, a quarter of an hour afterwards, when released from the trance, he was unable to answer the simplest query on a philosophical subject, and was even at a loss for sufficient language to express a common-place idea.” (“What am I?” vol. iii., p. 242.) That this is not overstated I can myself testify, from repeated observation of the same medium. And from other trance-speakers—such as Mrs. Hardinge, Mrs. Tappan, and Mr. Peebles—I have heard discourses which, for high and sustained eloquence, noble thoughts, and high moral

purpose, surpassed the best efforts of any preacher or lecturer within my experience.

4. *Impersonation*.—This occurs during trance. The medium seems taken possession of by another being; speaks, looks, and acts the character in a most marvellous manner; in some cases speaks foreign languages never even heard in the normal state. When the influence is violent or painful, the effects are such as have been in all ages imputed to possession by evil spirits.

5. *Healing*.—There are various forms of this. Sometimes by merely laying on of hands, an exalted form of simple mesmeric healing. Sometimes, in the trance state, the medium at once discovers the hidden malady, and prescribes for it, often describing very exactly the morbid appearance of internal organs.

In estimating the weight and value of the testimony in favour of the phenomena just enumerated, it must be borne in mind that they have occurred in an enlightened age, and have had to force their way against an opposing tide of scepticism, inasmuch as when they first made their appearance, all evidence in favour of the miraculous was practically bundled out of court. In addition to these considerations we must also remember that many of the converts to Spiritualism in this country have been men of education, and possessed of great reasoning powers. Amongst these may be named William Crookes, the chemist; Alfred Russell Wallace, the eminent naturalist; Professor de Morgan; Cromwell F. Varley, the Atlantic electrician; Serjeant Cox, who, while admitting the facts, does not accept *in toto* the theory of Spiritualism; Mr. Robert Chambers; Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, the former the editor of the *Art Journal*; William and Mary Howitt, Mr. Laurence Oliphant, T. A. Trollope, Captain Burton, and John Ruskin. The catalogue might be almost indefinitely extended, and a similar list of names, as highly respected and as widely known, might be compiled for almost every civilised country under the sun.

All this, however, I will admit, does not of itself prove the truth of Spiritualism. But, at any rate, it appears to me that we must draw rather largely upon the imagination if we suppose that men, who are considered reliable authorities in any other branch of human knowledge, are, upon this topic alone, subjected to hallucination and delusion, or that it is possible to include them in one of the two classes of imposters or dupes into which Spiritualists are popularly divided. And still less unlikely is it that such a classification is correct when we consider that many of those whose names I have given have been in the habit of weighing evidence and conducting scientific experiments, and who are, therefore, not likely to have deceived themselves or have been deceived. On the contrary, it seems to me that the only rational conclusion is that there may be more in Spiritualism than the popular estimate gives it credit for, the effect of which should be to stimulate and foster inquiry, instead of burking and smothering it as is usually the case.

I hold, therefore, that Spiritualism is worthy of consideration and inquiry for the following, among many other reasons that could be named:—



(a.) Because of the adequate testimony in its favour.

(b.) Because of the acknowledged intelligence of many of its witnesses.

(c.) Because of the absence of any conceivable motive for perpetual fraud on the part of such witnesses.

(d.) Because it supplies a wide-spread need by palpably demonstrating the reality of a continued existence after death.

(e.) Because of the practical nature of the inquiry.

With reference to clause *e*, as to the practical nature of the inquiry, I may point out that this is pre-eminently the case as regards both its method and purpose. Spiritualism is, above all, a science of observation, and its conclusions are proved in a rational and natural manner, viz., by an appeal to hard and stubborn facts, the evidence of which cannot be denied. Opinions and theories may be annulled by time, but not so any fact which has once been found to be true after fair and impartial examination. Thus, Spiritual phenomena having been tried and tested by thousands of individuals in all countries, the only logical conclusion at which we can arrive is, that no matter how long and strenuously they may be denied on *à priori* ground, sooner or later they will, in spite of all opposition and ridicule, come to be universally acknowledged as true. It required but extended knowledge of natural laws to establish the truth of Gallileo's proposition concerning the motion of the earth. Had he given no proof of his assertion, it might still have been disbelieved, but all denial falls before a knowledge of the principle. So it is with Spiritualism. It requires but a recognition of its absolute foundation upon facts governed by natural laws to render it capable of universal acceptance. Those who deny the possibility of spiritual phenomena are in the same false position as those who denied the motion of the earth. They prejudice and declare them absurd, even as a belief in the Antipodes was once held in light esteem.

Spiritualism is also practical because of the accessibility of its evidences. Unlike a purely scientific fact (*e.g.* the motion of the earth or its distance from the sun, &c.), the proof of which lies not in the hands of the ignorant, but with the learned and educated, the phenomena of Spiritualism can be tested and proved by all the world. They are being repeated day after day, month after month, and year after year, in all quarters of the globe, admitting of repeated testing and re-testing.

In its purpose, however, it is of all things the most intensely practical. These phenomena, it is claimed, settle beyond the possibility of doubt the question which has from time immémorial troubled and perplexed the minds of men—"If a man die shall he live again?" It proves undeniably that death is not the suspension or extinction of life; that the world behind the veil is as visibly and tangibly real as the world of our daily tasks; that personal individual responsibility remains intact; and that our destiny is fixed by no arbitrary rule, but rather by the thoughts, feelings, and desires of the present probationary stage of existence;—in short, it points out to demonstration, the exact nature of the future life as well as the reality thereof. Do we not gain considerably by such knowledge? Can proof such as will

satisfy the average mind of to-day be found elsewhere? I trow not. And had Spiritualism done nothing more than this it would be fairly entitled to our respect and consideration, seeing that by palpable demonstration and example it shows that the destiny of our race is not the grave; that life, and not death, is the goal to which we are hastening, and for which we should prepare.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE EXISTING BREACH BETWEEN MODERN CULTURE AND THE POPULAR FAITH.

"One question more than others all  
From thoughtful minds implores reply;  
It is, as breathed from star and pall,  
What fate awaits us when we die?"—*W. R. Alger.*

"Religion is for the time hard pressed by the vigorous pioneers of Science, and in this strait experimental evidence of the existence of Modern Spiritual phenomena would assist her beyond measure."—*Robert Dale Owen.*

"There is neither standing still nor retrogression  
In the laws of Eternal Governance,  
And Death itself which prompts thee to repine,  
Is no evil unto thee nor unto thine,  
But a step from Good to Better—an advance."—*Charles Mackay.*

### THE SUBJECT PROPOSED.

THE doctrine of immortality is being, and is likely to be, increasingly pressed upon the thoughtful consideration of all who are cognisant of, and care to think about, the tendency of modern culture, and its influence upon the constitution and development of modern society.

Of all the questions of the times this is, beyond others, the most vitally important, inasmuch as it is intimately connected with, and essential to, the welfare and happiness of the great human world. Upon this issue depends all that makes life valuable and worth the living; and without the hope, or rather the *knowledge*, of the continuity of life, existence would seem at best but a sublime mockery—the dreary shadow of a blank and hopeless despair.

For what is life to man, with all his desires, his hopes, his labours, and his fears, if the passing hour be the end and aim of all being? Every day his fondest hopes are seemingly blighted, his efforts rendered fruitless, his intentions misunderstood, his love despised. He gathers thorns where he had hoped for figs, thistles for grapes, and in the flushed moment of expectancy his aspirations elude his grasp and melt into thin air. If this present stage of being is the only one, if our only heritage is this "passing show," then Life has indeed no meaning, and is an enigma as cruel as inexplicable, and over the threshold of existence should be written the mournful despairing legend—

"Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'entrate."

If this is indeed the cruel truth, that man, standing as he does at the apex of the visible creation—its highest development—is doomed to retrace his steps, lying down with hopes blighted by disappointments; with keen memories of misfortunes, mistakes, and failures; with a

deepening sense that the travail of life is in vain and fruitless ; and that too at the very moment his aspirations reach the threshold of an invisible spiritual world,—if this be the truth, then indeed are mankind left without hope in the world.

And the reverse ? The certainty of the continuity of life lights up the dark picture with rays of hope. In its light the decayed hopes and scattered plans of to-day bear a glorious fruition to-morrow. The failings and foibles of the present are in the future transformed into golden-winged evangels of love. The possibilities of being are revealed, and humanity reassures itself with the thought that its struggles and its endeavours are not all vain, that the thorns and brambles now obstructing its path may ultimately be transformed into the sweetest flowers of paradise.

#### THE TWO THEORIES OF EXISTENCE.

Two theories respecting the ultimate of human existence and its relation to the world present themselves for consideration. Each attempts to solve the problem, and answer the question which for ages has been the cry of the great human world—"If a man die shall he live again ?" These two theories, for the sake of brevity and distinction, I shall term "Spiritualism" and "Materialism."\* By the former is meant that view of the world which teaches that the thinking principle in man—the *ego*—is immortal and indestructible ; by the latter, the opposite doctrine, which asserts that at death this principle is annihilated. The one, of course, also implies the existence of a spiritual world, the other a denial of the same.

These two views are diametrically opposed to each other. The antagonism between them is absolute. It is not possible to keep clear of both sides and choose a middle course. It is one of two things ; there is no alternative. The language of one school is, "Man is immortal and passes from this life to an existence invisible to mortal eyes ;" that of the other, a direct and emphatic denial of the affirmation. Can it then be said that the truth lies between the two ?

#### THE DOCTRINE OF SPIRITUALISM.

This has always held a prominent position in human history, among all nations and in every period of time. In its broadest sense all the world's faiths have their foundation upon this doctrine. The existence of the soul apart from the material body has been more or less distinctly taught by each and every creed, and moreover, most, if not all, have justified such teaching by an appeal to certain abnormal phenomena, generally considered miraculous in nature and origin, as practical demonstrations of its verity.†

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\* As will be seen farther on, the word "Spiritualism" is used here simply as a general term to signify the expressed faith in the "supernatural" which has obtained among all nations, and in every period of time. Modern Spiritualism will be so distinguished.

† "There is no part of human history, or human literature, which does not abound in the plainest demonstrations of this influence—the influence of the spiritual world operating on this incarnated world. We find it in almost every book we open ; we have it in the Scriptures from the first page to the last, from the Creation to Christ, a period of 4000 years. We have it in all contemporary literature ; in the Grecian,

Of all forms of religious belief at present current in the world, Christianity undoubtedly enunciates this belief in the immortality of the race the most distinctly and emphatically. Those holding this belief claim its advent as the commencement of a new era in the history and destiny of the human world. Not, they say, that a future life was wholly unknown before Christ, but because he so practically demonstrated its reality by His teaching and miracles, sealing His testimony by a personal confirmation, that to all intents and purposes it was a new discovery. Thus, while admitting that glimpses of light had occasionally pierced the veil of the unknown—waifs and portents of a clime somewhere beyond in the realm of space—this school of thought considers such experiences to have been exceptional, confined to a few, and far from satisfactory, leaving the future more or less a vague hope.

Conceding the reality and genuineness of the Christian evidences (which many in the light of present experiences can readily do), Jesus of Nazareth was the first (at least as far as western nations are concerned) to universalise the glad and welcome truth of the duality and continuity of life. His whole career was open evidence of the power of the life that lies beyond the body, and by His death and reappearance, an indestructible spiritual man, the veil of the future was raised, proving the dreams and aspirations of the race to be eternal verities.

The first stage of man's redemption would thus be gained in the absolute consciousness of new and larger developments of being. Through the vista of time he saw his tears transmuted into smiles, his pain to joy, the din of battle into the victor's triumph, and the

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the Roman, the Egyptian, the Persian, the Indian, and the Arabian. It glows in the Zendavesta; it stands mountains high in the Vedas; Buddha lives in it in divine reverie; Brahma proclaims it in his Avatars; it is the very life-blood of the Scandinavian Eddas. There

All succeeds to the will,  
Because the Odreifer  
Now have descended  
To the old, hoïy earth.

"If we go into nations that never had a literature, this eternal truth is walking there in all its strength. The American Indians—North and South—had it ages before the white man arrived. The Red Men felt the inspirations of the Great Spirit in their forests, and spoke as inspired by it at their councils. They declared that the angels of the Great Spirit walked as friends among their ancestors. The Mexicans prophesied of a people coming in a ship from the East to take from them their long-possessed sovereignty. The Australian natives refuse to go out at night because then, they think, the powers of darkness are in the ascendant. The Obi of the Africans speaks the same language. The conviction of the permanent continuity of the spiritual presses on the earth-walls of humanity wherever spirit lives.

"Passing from the Bible to the book containing the finest writings next to the Bible, the Apocrypha, we find the same principle taking its easy, natural stand, as a perpetual agent in human history. Josephus takes it up with the same sober assurance as he takes up his pen. We have the miraculous deeds of the Maccabees; we have the grand apparition of the fiery horse, and the horseman, and the radiant youths who punished the intrusion of Heliodorus into the Temple of Jerusalem. We have the inspired harbinger of woe and the dread apparitions and prodigies of the siege of the great city. The fathers of the Church received the miraculous as part of their Gospel heritage. The Christian Church, Roman, Grecian, and Waldensian, never for a moment doubted the super-human demonstrations of their religion. Every page of their several histories is freighted with the miraculous."—*William Howitt in History of the Supernatural.*



groaning and travail of creation ceased. Death lay prostrate at the feet of Life, and the world behind the veil became as tangibly and visibly real as the world of our daily tasks, a world in which the corruptible had put on incorruption, and the mortal immortality.

It is upon this evidence, already nearly 2000 years old, that the Christian Church to-day rests its foundation of belief in, and advocacy of, the spiritual nature and indestructibility of life. With what result I shall presently show.

#### THE DOCTRINE OF MATERIALISM.

On the other hand, the materialistic view of the world is a comparatively new thing, if we except the Epicurean or Atheistic Philosophy of the ancients. It is essentially a product of civilisation. "In rude ages," observes Theodore Parker, "men reason but little. As they begin to be civilised they ask proof of immortality. Hence come doubts, enquiries, denials."

In the present age this school of thought has attained a degree of enlightenment and power rarely, if ever, before witnessed, and its ultimate is the existing conflict between modern culture and the popular faith.

Speaking generally, its history is naturally divided into two periods or stages of development; namely, Rationalism, as developed in France and Germany during the latter part of the last century, and the Scientific Materialism of our own times. Each development has had its own characteristics, both of time and place. For instance, Rationalism in France ran riot, and speedily ended in the Revolution. It was frivolous and immoral. Sensual prosperity was made the supreme law of existence. Its influence was comparatively weak and transient, and a reaction soon set in.

These charges could not, however, be made against the same movement in Germany. There it was more earnest, and came more slowly and more thoroughly to maturity, and was, consequently, the more dangerous.

This school of thought (Rationalism) reduced Christianity to its own standard of reason. Though admitting the probable existence of a Supreme Being on the one hand, yet, on the other, the possibility of miracles, or of a revelation, was strenuously denied. Rationalism struck the supernatural out of religion, but left the *idea* of a God, moral freedom, and a faint hope of immortality.

In the next advance, however, these three fundamental principles are abolished altogether. Materialism recognises neither God, free-will, nor a life after death. It denies the existence of Spirit—the absolute and divine, as well as the created human. It attempts to explain the existence of the world and of man from matter alone, and the power of motion connected therewith. Its distinctive teaching is that matter is everything, and that there is nothing else; that it is eternal and imperishable, that all forms of life are but modifications of it.\*

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\* "Abandoning all disguise, the confession that I feel bound to make before you is, that I prolong the vision backward across the boundary of the experimental evidences,

The negative philosophy of the last century so weakened the influence of the Christian Church, that it needed but the hints of modern Savans to render the deductions of Materialism capable of a widespread acceptance. It has now united itself with all the tendencies of the age, and has passed into the general opinions not only of the educated, but in a grosser and clumsier form, into those of the labouring classes also. The present characteristics of scepticism, with regard to the supernatural, are of the most formidable kind. They are essentially different from those of a century since. Then, the sceptic was strong in hate and defiance, whereas now he is serene in dogmatic indifference. "I hate such a God as you present to me," was the cry of old ; "I really know nothing about it, and can find out nothing," is the bland utterance now. The old sceptic stormed and screamed ; the modern one shrugs his shoulders and goes on with his work. He says, "The Christian miracles may, or may not be true ; they are, however, incapable of verification, and therefore worthless." It is the caring for none of these things, the blank indifference of despair, which emphatically characterises the present scientific scepticism, in the rapid spread of which many see cause for serious alarm.

#### THE BREACH BETWEEN SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY.

As modern scepticism has resulted largely from the study of the physical sciences, Science is, on one hand, popularly recognised as the advocate of the doctrine of materialism, more especially as many of our most popular scientists are avowed materialists ; while, on the other, the popular theology, or Christianity (so called), is regarded as the patron and defender of the spiritualistic view of the world. The issue may thus be said to be between Science and Theology.

Between these two, a fierce contest has been and is still waging : a contest in which the former, by its incontestable facts, has wrung concession after concession from the latter. One by one has Theology given up old and cherished theories ; or, if she has not altogether given them up, she has, seemingly, so modified them that they harmonise with every new discovery of Science, whose votaries (discovering the impossibility of reconciling the Bible miracles with modern knowledge of nature's immutable laws) have assumed the unreliable and untrustworthy character, as well of the premises as of the theories built thereon. Not the slightest use is it to quote texts to such : they have gone far beyond an appeal to mere authority. They point with an incredulous smile to the testimony of the past against the *ipse dixit* of the Church. "You persecuted to the death all my ancestors," says Science, "and have but recently had the grace to be ashamed of it. You set the canon of Scripture against the facts of observation, but the facts stand, and your canon had to adjust itself as it best might."\*

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and discern in that matter which we, in our ignorance, and notwithstanding our previous reverence for its Creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, the promise and potency of every form and quality of life. Religion, though valuable in itself, is only man's speculative creation. It is good for man to form for himself a theology if only to keep him quiet."—*Professor Tyndall.*

\* Professor Draper, who will not be accused of undue partisanship either for one side or the other, thus enumerates the retreat of the Popular Theology from the many

What wonder, then, that such men will tell you they cannot but doubt! They are, unquestionably, men of power and influence in the community, and their views may fairly be taken as an index of general public opinion. Thus, when told of "miracles," of "angels who once talked with men," of "inspiration," "revelation," and of a life beyond the grave, palpable proof thereof is naturally and justly demanded, but demanded in vain. "Give me tangible evidence that I may see, hear, and feel these things. If they are realities, I will then believe," is the cry. Science argues, and one cannot but admit that the argument is reasonable enough, that the best evidence that these things *did* occur in the past under the conditions named, would be that they *do* occur in the present under like circumstances which can be proved, tried, and tested. This is certainly not the case with the ancient miracles. Theologians may preach *theories* till doomsday, but, in the absence of demonstrable proof, the labour will but be in vain. Proof, *palpable proof* of Immortality, is what the world requires, and *that* the Church acknowledges herself powerless to give.\*

positions she has so unsuccessfully defended:—"When Science is commanded to surrender her intellectual convictions, may she not ask the ecclesiastic to remember the past? The contest respecting the figure of the earth, and the location of heaven and hell, ended adversely to him. He affirmed that the earth is an extended plain, and that the sky is a firmament, the floor of heaven, through which again and again persons have been seen to ascend. The globular form demonstrated beyond any possibility of contradiction by astronomical facts, and the voyage of Magellan's ship, he then maintained that it is the central body of the universe, all others being in subordination to it, and it the grand object of God's regard. Forced from this position, he next affirmed that it is motionless, the sun and stars *actually* revolving, as they *apparently* do, around it. The invention of the telescope here again proved that he was in error. Then he maintained that all the motions of the solar system are regulated by Providential intervention; the 'Principia' of Newton proved that they are due to irresistible law. He then affirmed that the earth and all the celestial bodies were created about 6000 years ago, and that in six days the order of nature was settled, and plants and animals in their various tribes introduced. Constrained by the accumulating mass of adverse evidence, he enlarged his days into periods of indefinite length, only, however, to find that this device was inadequate. The six ages, with their six special creations, could no longer be maintained, when it was discovered that species slowly emerged in one age, reached a culmination in a second, and gradually died out in a third. This overlapping from age to age would not only have demanded creations, but re-creations also. He affirmed that there had been a deluge, which covered the whole earth above the tops of the highest mountains, and that the waters of this flood were removed by a wind. Corrected ideas respecting the dimensions of the atmosphere, and of the sea, and of the operation of evaporation, proved how untenable such statements are. Of the progenitors of the human race, he declared that they had come from their Maker's hands, perfect both in body and mind, and had subsequently experienced a fall. He is now considering how best to dispose of the evidence constantly accumulating respecting the savage condition of pre-historic man." He further adds, "Is it at all surprising that the number of those who hold the opinions of the Church in light esteem should so rapidly increase? Can that be received as a trustworthy guide in the invisible, which falls into so many errors with the visible? How can that give evidence of the moral and spiritual which has so signally failed in the physical? It is not possible to dispose of these conflicting facts as 'empty shadows,' 'vain devices,' 'convictious coming from knowledge falsely so-called,' 'errors wearing a deceitful appearance of truth,' as the Church stigmatises them. On the contrary, they are stern witnesses, bearing emphatic and unimpeachable testimony against the ecclesiastical claim of infallibility, and fastening a conviction of ignorance and blindness upon her."—*Draper's History of Conflict between Religion and Science.*

\* In connection with this thought, Epes Sargent, in his "Proof Palpable of Immortality," remarks—"Is the *proof palpable* not wanted? Consider the deadness of all



So Science has apparently come to the conclusion, that to search for such an open demonstration is hopeless—nay, has even gone so far as to assert that it does not exist, although such an assertion is contrary to, and at variance with, its own fundamental principles. "It is not justified," as Arago observes, "in saying what cannot be outside the realm of pure mathematics;" and dogmatism is as much to be abrogated in Science as in Theology. The dismal creed of the Materialist may briefly be classified thus:—I. *Disbelief in the Invisible*. II. *Contempt of Religion*. III. *Undue exaltation of the physical nature and attributes of Man*. Or, it may be more forcibly stated by one writer of this school in the following estimate of the Bible and the Christian Church. He asserts that the former is "a farrago of delusions and contradictions;" and the latter, "a mischievous compound of superstition and credulity, in which ambitious priests compass their own ends, by deluding foolish dupes." The secret of the wide-spread success of such ideas is because they express without hesitation what the mass of men in our generation think. They are repeated by all the echoes of the century, some expressing them in sober language, others with a brutal cynicism, until religious belief, as a fervent influence upon the soul, is well nigh, if not altogether swamped.

Further, these materialistic ideas have invaded the churches also. Notwithstanding the mistrust and insane dread with which the spirit of scientific inquiry has been regarded by the leaders of religious thought, its influence has been perceptibly felt by them. The heart and intellect of Christian society has been educated by it to an extent little dreamt of during the past half century; and the ideas of thoughtful minds within the churches have been modified concerning most, if not all, orthodox doctrines, if "modified" is the right word to employ. It seems rather that the old landmarks are being rapidly swept away, and the majority of the people fast becoming a prey to a

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belief in a future for man amongst some of the foremost minds of the age. Listen to the almost contemptuous denials that come from such men as Haeckel, Vogt, Feuerbach, Büchner, Moleschott, and many of the leading scientists in Germany. See the indisposition of their brother scientists in England and America to gainsay what they so persistently and boldly assert. Hear the shouts of approval from a crowded scientific assemblage in Germany, when Vogt proclaimed Atheism and annihilation as the creed of Science. If facts like these will not satisfy you that 'condescension,' which stoops to palpable evidences of Immortality, is not superfluous or untimely, listen to the words that come from the lips of such a devoted Christian as the late Albert Barnes of Philadelphia (the noted Bible commentator), well known to the religious public at home and abroad. Hear his cry of doubt and despair: 'It is all dark, dark, dark to my soul, and I cannot disguise it. In the distress and anguish of my own spirit, I confess that I see no light whatever.'

Also, M. A. (Oxon), commenting on Professor Tyndall's 1874 Belfast address: "We invite to it the attention of the ministers of religion, and all who have at heart the cause of truth. Let these consider the alternative that Science, by the mouth of its high priest, has placed before the people of England and America—and let them ponder on the answer they are prepared to give. Ho has spoken, and it is well to gauge accurately what he has thought right to say. He has lifted up his voice from the chiefest platform of Science, and his cry in effect has been, 'There is no God. There is no Spirit. There is no Immortality. Matter exists and nought else.' And his cry has been taken up and echoed by the voice of one (Professor Huxley) not less powerful than himself:—'Man needs not to look outside himself for the cause or end of his existence. He is but a machine.' Away go all the dogmas of religion. All are useless since the God to whom adoration and prayer are offered is wiped out."

cold despairing indifference. This utter and dreary nihilism is but the inevitable result of the unequal contest. It is sapping the fount and spring of all religion and morality. Everywhere are to be seen evidences of a deadness of faith, and profession without practical belief.

So complete has been the falling away and divorcement of the highest intelligence of the nation from its religion, that some see cause for serious alarm. This falling away may be disputed, but we have only to look around us to find society and literature replete with its signs. One must be singularly ignorant of what is going on in the world, who would affirm that the religion preached in our churches and chapels is believed in its entirety by the masses of educated and thinking people.\*

Moreover, it is a well-known and acknowledged fact that, in matters of religion, men are chiefly influenced by their reason, and women principally by their emotions. Remembering this, it is significant to observe that the number of ecclesiastical sceptics is increasing more rapidly amongst the former than amongst the latter.

There are those who consider the schism to be a lasting and permanent one. I confess I do not share their belief. But, however long this alienation of our intellectuality from our religion may last, one thing is certain: this is not the time for standing still. Something must be done towards healing the breach. That such a healing is possible, and that the missing link is within reach, I hope to prove satisfactorily. First, however, let us consider what are

#### THE CAUSES OF THE BREACH.

The present age is an inquiring one. In all things men ask the reason why much more than formerly. They are not satisfied to believe this or that, because their fathers believed it. They want to know the why and wherefore of what they have been taught. And surely this is right. Truth never fears the light of free inquiry, only we should take care that it is free. Honest doubt is better than a blind faith; for, while the former is the stepping-stone to higher and nobler truth, the latter is synonymous with a hopeless stagnation. *Rational* faith comes of honest doubt, and yet, though

"Most men have faith enough all thought to scout,  
Few trust God enough to dare to doubt."

The chief factors in the prevailing scepticism, as to the *bona fide* nature of the claims of the Christian Church, regarding a future life, are these:—

I.—*The inability of the Popular Faith to practically demonstrate its own expressed Belief in the Supernatural.*

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\* "Whoever has had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the mental condition of the intelligent classes in Europe and America, must have observed that there is a great and rapidly increasing departure from the popular religious faith, and that, while among the more frank, this divergence is not concealed, there is a far more extensive and far more dangerous secession private and unacknowledged.

"So widespread and so powerful is this secession, that it can neither be treated with contempt nor with punishment; it cannot be extinguished by derision, by vituperation, or by force, and the time is rapidly approaching when it will give rise to serious political results."—*Professor Draper, in Preface to "Conflict between Science and Religion."*

II.—*The advocacy of Immortality under conditions so inhuman and cruel, as to be too horrible for credence.*

I.—The greatest stumbling-block of Christendom are the "miracles," or spiritual gifts, upon which she predicates her *raison d'être*, and her belief in an invisible spiritual world. If, as is asserted, the "miracles" were the chief supports of Christianity in its early days, it is equally certain that they are now its main difficulty, and the primary cause of the dilemma in which the Church finds itself with relation to Modern Science.

A vastly increased knowledge of Nature has revealed the immutability of action connected with her laws, and unbroken succession of cause and effect. The knowledge of the absolute uniformity of all her operations, together with the fact that many things, now traced to natural causes, have in the past been regarded as miraculous, has naturally created a distrust of the supernatural in general, and of the Christian miracles, or evidences of immortality, in particular.

Slowly, yet surely, the basis of the expressed faith of the Church in the supernatural has given way beneath her feet. She points in vain to the ancient miracles, because she regards them as beyond the reign or action of law, and confined to a certain period of time. Practical demonstration *to-day* is needed, that being, in the eyes of Science, the only absolute authority; and look where we will throughout all Christendom, this demonstration is only conspicuous by its absence. Faith, no doubt, is powerful in its influence upon the soul, but even faith at times must be reinforced and strengthened by actual knowledge. Paul charged the ancient Christians to add to their faith, knowledge. If this was advisable then, at the very time when the memory of the "signs and wonders," wrought by the Founder of the Christian faith Himself, was fresh and vivid in the minds of many—at a time, too, when similar manifestations were daily enacting in their midst—how much more are they needed *now*, when all the faith-upbuilding signs have disappeared from the midst of Christendom? If the "miracles" were worked for the purpose of *giving* faith in Christ and the Bible, it is pertinent to inquire whether they are not as necessary now to *restore* it? Verily did Luther, brave heart though he was, in standing firmly against the abuses which had crept into the Church of his day, sow also the seeds of her decay.\* In sweeping away the truth contained

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\* "The Christian system of the spiritual and material world stood for 1500 years unshaken. All at once the monk Copernicus stood forth. With a mighty hand he pushed away the globe from the centre of creation, fixed the sun in its place, and bade the former make the circuit of the latter in a year, and revolve on its axis in twenty-four hours. By this fortunate discovery much that was incomprehensible became intelligible, much that was inexplicable, demonstrable. The Pope and the clergy were struck with consternation at it. They threatened curses and excommunication, but Copernicus had already made his escape from them, the earth was now in motion, and no anathema was able to arrest its progress.

"But Protestantism was not satisfied with this. It went further. It promulgated the dogma that there were no such things as apparitions, or middle state. Luther and his confederates renounced all claim to the government of the invisible world: they extinguished the fires of purgatory, and enlarged the bounds of hell by adding *Hades* to it. No middle state of purification was any longer believed in, but every departed soul entered upon its place of destination, either heaven or hell. Presentiments, visions, and apparitions were regarded either as deceptions, delusions, or imagina-



in, with the cobwebs which had gathered around and obscured, the supernaturalism of his times, he destroyed the only weapon the Church had which could not be turned against her own heart. She will do well to look the situation in the face; for unless her tactics and mode of defence are changed, it needs no prophet to foretell her doom. At present she has no means of resisting the advances of her unrelenting foe, who, in the first flush of vigour and success, has grown as intolerant and bigoted as Theology herself has been in the past.

II.—Undoubtedly this antagonism of Modern Thought to the Popular Faith has been attained all the more speedily, because orthodox teachers persisted, and still persist, in teaching the Immortality of the Soul, accompanied by dogmas so inhuman and cruel, that the human heart refuses to believe in a future coupled with such conditions. The popular theology, that countless myriads of human beings are brought into existence, generation after generation, capable of suffering intensely, with the clear certainty that the vast mass of them must spend an undying existence in fearful anguish for want of saving faith in a gospel which but few of them had a chance of hearing, is a picture too horrible for credence, supplanting, as it does, the God of Everlasting Love by a worse than Fiend-God—a veritable demon, capricious, cruel, grotesque, and awful, who marches at the head of the vast army of life, cursing the mass of mankind with a doom of unutterable woe. The Rev. Baldwin Brown, a minister of the Congregational body, fully alive to the vast issues at stake upon this question, and the relation which it bears to the scepticism and infidelity of the times, recently gave utterance to the following remarkable statement:—"Belief in these terrible doctrines is no longer possible. To persist in preaching them, and to insist that your teachers shall preach them, is to drive men—the great world to which you preach—into open infidelity. How

tions, or, where the facts could not be denied, as the work of the devil and his angels. By their decree, that the pious were immediately after death received into heaven and the impious plunged into hell, the gate was closed against the return of departed spirits to this world. Encouraged by this, the physical philosophers very soon promulgated the doctrine that there was nothing in this world but matter and its properties. They delved in matter, and finding nothing by their tests but matter, they declared that there were no powers but such as were material," &c.—*Jung Stilling's Pneumatology*, pp. 15-22.

Commenting upon the above extract, William Howitt remarks, "Jung Stilling has correctly described the progress of modern infidelity and materialism from the act of Protestantism at the Reformation. Finding the Lord's heritage overrun with a rampant growth of the devil's tares, in the shape of seditious miracle, they forgot to consult the Lord's recommendation so conspicuously given in the gospel to let the tares grow with the wheat until the final harvest, lest they should pull up the wheat along with them. To get rid of false miracles they plucked up the true, and to prevent the return of the false, they determined to root up the very principle of faith in the miraculous, in spite of the whole world, with its 5500 years of miraculous facts protesting against so insane a rejection of its laws—in spite of the plain words of Christ and his apostles, that miracle was the patrimony of the Christian Church, and that the mark of its true disciple should be that 'these signs should follow them that believe.—In My name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover'—In spite of volumes of authentic history by men of undoubted character, narrating ages of such facts prior to the corruptions of Rome. It was a fatal act, and being in open opposition to nature and history, was certain to produce the most deplorable consequences."

far the world has already been drawn into infidelity by the preaching of such a gospel, look around you and see. The attitude of science with relation to religion is simply, at heart, the inevitable protest of the honest human intellect, fairly awake and energetic, against a narrow, selfish, and exclusive, and therefore wholly incredible theology." Startling words for orthodoxy these, coming as they do from her own ranks, and from the mouth of one endorsing all the popular dogmas, save that of the eternal torment of the damned, but they are none the less true.

Upon the bearing of this doctrine, and the teaching thereon of Modern Spiritualism, I may hereafter devote more attention.

#### SPIRITUALISM NECESSARY FOR THE HEALING OF THE BREACH.

I have shown that the current opinion which regards miracles, or spiritual gifts, as supernatural in their character and origin, is one of the chief reasons of the prevailing scepticism concerning their reality, and the question arises, whether or not a rational solution of the difficulty is forthcoming.

I think so. If it can be proved that the signs and wonders of the first century were phenomena, albeit spiritual in character, occurring under laws which have existed from all time, regulating intercourse between this world and the next, then a rational basis of belief will have been established.

There is no reason for supposing that the reign of law is necessarily confined to mundane spheres. The probability is, and Spiritualism confirms this probability as a fact, that irresistible laws manifest in aspects as varied and as absolute in intermundane spheres also. Immutable and continuous in nature, the manifestations of natural law are seen in all periods—it may be at times more or less powerful in degree and frequency—yet perpetual in action from generation to generation, suffering no intermission.

Upon this hypothesis, it is obvious that if the miracles of Jesus, and the spiritual gifts of the first century, are ascribed to the action of laws, unknown or but little understood at the time, then such laws must not only have been in constant operation during the intervening centuries, but should also be in full force amongst us at the present time. Whether such gifts are so manifesting themselves amongst us, and can be traced through the history of the last 2000 years, is a question to be decided by the evidence of fact, and upon this must rest the establishment of our hypothesis.

If this standpoint is sustained by history, and confirmed to-day in our own midst, then we have open demonstration that the signs and wonders of the early days of the Church were natural and credible. Thus spiritual gifts in the 19th century would become the strongest proof of the reality of the spiritual gifts of the first and second centuries, and I need hardly point out how vastly important such testimony would be to the Christian Church. It is self-evident. The vital question is, Can such evidences be found?

Yes; they are in our midst to-day—the signs and wonders, the proofs of immortality, for which the world has hungered. Modern

spiritual manifestations raise the question from the region of hypothesis into that of absolute fact. Let modern miracles be acknowledged, and all argument ceases. The miracles of the past may be refuted on the testimony of men living nearly 2000 years ago, but the evidence of those now living, numbering tens and hundreds of thousands, scattered all over the globe, cannot be disputed. Spiritual manifestations are real, but not miraculous, in the popular sense of the term. They occur in perfect harmony with natural law, and thus place within reach of the Church the very proofs demanded of her by Science, and for lack of which she fails to stand her ground in the contest in which she is engaged. Modern Spiritualism can enable Christianity, such as Christ taught, to meet Science on her own ground—viz., that of scientific demonstration. The facts and phenomena of Spiritualism are identical with the Bible miracles, and both are linked together by a bond of mutual uses. The ancient facts place the modern ones among the normal experiences of mankind, while the modern rescue the ancient from the grasp of Materialism. These phenomena respond to every requirement of Science. They have been witnessed and tabulated by the same means and methods used in the investigation and tabulation of other facts, and nothing is wanted to make the evidence more complete.

#### SPIRITUALISM, THE ONLY MEDIATOR.

I would further point out that it is Spiritualism alone that can mediate in this conflict between Science and Theology. In the future, they must unite on this common ground, though that time may yet be far distant. It will not come till Science has lost her dogmatism, and Religion her bigotry. But, to each, Spiritualism can commend a faith founded not upon tradition, but experience—a creed suited to the advanced thought of the age, satisfying its deepest wants. Rational faith, testified to by actual knowledge, is the only power that can restore a vitalising religion in the minds of the people.

#### THE QUESTION OF THE AGES SOLVED.

Spiritualism satisfactorily solves the question of the ages by producing evidence from beyond the grave, from whence alone the answer could come. It banishes the universal fear of death, to which nine-tenths of Christendom are subject, a state of affairs which certainly suggests grave doubts as to the efficacy of the popular teaching. And what, after all, is equal to positive knowledge concerning the next world, which Spiritualism alone supplies? Humanity, pausing on the Mount of Vision, sees its fellows passing from the shore of one eternity towards another. One by one they move with downcast faces to the tomb, and the way, both to the living and the dead, seems dark and drear. Who has not lost a friend, and has not wished it were possible for that friend to return? What would not be given for just one glimpse of the loved one, whose earthly form lies still and cold, for one word from the sweet voice hushed in death? Are all these hopes and longings vain? Thank God! no! The dead are *human* still, and being human, they live and love. Unseen they are everywhere; Death has no power over them; the grave cannot keep them back. "Oh, death!



where is thy sting? where, grave, thy victory?" A voice from the Great Beyond shouts forth in triumph, "Lost in the joys of Life." Ah! we need not sorrow, for we *know* the dead are alive. Those we loved so dearly and so well have not gone for ever. As some writer has touchingly said: "In the loss of earthly friends and of children, we see the vine growing up by the side of the fences, and passing over the top, the *flower* is on the other side. Some of us have dear ones flowering in heaven. The flower is out of sight, but the bloom is on the other side, and none the less sweet than if we had it here, for they are radiant with the Father's glory." Oh, the dead are not dead; they are near at hand—oh! so near! Our eyes, with spiritual vision, can at times pierce the thin veil, and see the shining forms of loved ones walking in the sunlight of another and brighter life; our hands can clasp theirs once more in fond embrace, and our ears are greeted with the fond words and love of angel friends.

Such, then, are the needs of the world and the Christian Church, and such is the aid which Spiritualism can proffer; while, with true religion, it labours for one object—God and Immortality, and, like the Tree of Life, its leaves are for the "healing of the nations."

## CHAPTER II.

### MODERN THOUGHT VERSUS MODERN FACTS.

"All new truths have, at first, the lot of struggling against old beliefs."—*Fichte*.

"A fresh commission never yet devolved on the old agencies of Providence."—*J. W. Jackson*.

#### THE MAIN DIFFICULTY OF MODERN THOUGHT.

THE main difficulty of modern thought with regard to the doctrine of a future life is, that its claim upon the attention of the world has been based solely upon an appeal to the emotions. From pulpit and platform passionate and vehement assertions have been made, that without such a belief, life, morality, and religion are but empty shadows, obtaining in such a case but little real hold upon mankind.

Here the argument (if argument it can be called) has paused; simply because, no matter how fervent and earnest the desire to press home such a faith may be, it has been found impossible to pass onward from the region of speculation into that of absolute knowledge.

It is here that Modern Spiritualism steps in, and, by its phenomenal evidence, confirms and demonstrates to the human intellect that which hitherto had rested only upon an appeal to the emotional faculties of the human mind.

#### THE ATTITUDE OF SCIENCE.\*

Modern Spiritualism, and its evidences, have now entered upon their fourth decade. For thirty years and more it has been passing through

\* In my statement of the attitude of the scientific thought of the day in relation to the facts and phenomena of Modern Spiritualism, I speak of it as a whole. Science has, generally speaking, undoubtedly been antagonistic to the new facts, and its general attitude has been such as I describe in the instances given. Yet, on the other hand, spiritual science can claim not a few eminent in scientific research.



a struggle for existence as fierce and prolonged as that which, in the past, has ever fallen to the lot of the new and true. It has had no unique experience in the mode of its reception. On every side its facts have been assailed; the veracity of its witnesses impeached. Conflicting theories have, over and over again, relegated its phenomena to the limbo either of delusion or fraud; and the amount of scientific ignorance and arrogance which has been displayed, may yet put to shame many an one who has spoken without knowledge.

Agassiz "resolved to sit with no one." He had made up his mind beforehand that "nothing would come of it."

Faraday considered that those "who say they see these things are not competent witnesses of facts," and that "it would be a condescension to pay more attention to them."

Brewster said, "Spirit is the last thing I will give in to;" while

Herbert Spencer had decided the question beforehand "on *à priori* grounds."

Huxley is not interested in the phenomena, even if they are true, and

Tyndall looks upon Spiritualism not only as a delusion, but also as "a kind of intellectual whoredom."

Such is the character of the bases of denial upon which the majority of the world of Science reject the modern evidences of the duality and continuity of life. In general, all the ideas of the past concerning a future existence are considered to be but the delusions of a heated and warped imagination, and the phenomena of Spiritualism, in particular, the work of designing knaves and wilful impostors.

The modesty of such a sweeping charge is, to say the least, doubtful. The character of not a few of the witnesses thus impeached is far above suspicion, and the evidence itself is such that no court of justice would reject.\*

The verdict of modern science is founded upon a pure assumption. It had settled on *à priori* grounds that there was no such thing as continuity of life, no indwelling spirit in man. Delving in matter alone, the world of spirit had gradually receded farther and farther from its gaze and ken, and all idea of the spiritual or supernatural in nature

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\* "How do we prove this? You enter any court of justice to take human evidence, and assemble a certain number of witnesses, three of whom shall be acknowledged as wholly unreliable—wholly untruthful; you examine these separately, and, despite their unreliableness, they shall each separately confirm each other's statements; this is evidence which no court of civilisation can reject—evidence which, for hundreds of years, has been accepted as testimony in all courts of judicature. Now, enlarge upon your position: let your three witnesses be truthful; the fact that they shall confirm each other is no additional weight—none at all. It is deemed by the keenest analyst of human nature impossible that three persons separate from each other shall represent the same circumstances exactly, unless these circumstances have a common origin in truth, no matter whether the witnesses be reliable or not. But, double the number of witnesses—treble it—multiply it by hundreds, by thousands, by millions—remove your witnesses to every part of the world, separate them by ocean, by continents, and spaces of time that it is impossible to bridge over; and when instead of three millions you have three times told three millions of persons, each testifying the same general points of fact, that is authority which we think we are justified in presenting to you, and it is upon such authority Spiritualism rests."—*Emma Hardinge*.

was relegated to the obscure past or the obscurer future. "The philosophy of the nineteenth century was being fast reduced to a mere statement of the contents of sensation, and the philosophers of the day were looking for an easy victory over the most respectable of traditions, when, lo ! up starts a mass of phenomena, not merely inexplicable by any known law, but incompatible with any hypothesis but that of spiritual agency."

Against the gratuitous assumptions of science must be placed the opinions of not a few, founded on fact and observation. Agassiz, Faraday, Brewster, Spencer, Huxley and Tyndall, together with many of the "greater or lesser lights" of science, as the case may be, assert, *without investigation*, that the alleged facts do not occur.

The testimony of Crookes, Wallace, Mapes, Hare, De Morgan, Robert Chambers, *et multorum aliorum*, who have examined and witnessed the phenomena, and who have, therefore, a right to express an opinion thereon, is that the facts do occur as stated.\*

The two classes of opinion are certainly conflicting, but the difficulty of choosing between them is not overwhelming.

It is hardly necessary to point out how unreasonable and unjustifiable such a standpoint is on the part of the former and those who follow their lead. The attitude of science in this respect is indefensible. The aim and purpose of scientific enquiry is, or should be, the study of facts, and the logical conclusions deducible therefrom. But, on the one hand, we have a class of men who declare that, in their researches, the conviction has been forced upon them that the present life is the goal and ultimate of human thought and action ; and, on the other, a set of facts which claim to throw additional light upon the issue involved. The whole tendency of the teaching of such men as Tyndall and Huxley is, that the materialistic view of the world utterly and exclusively ignores, nay, even renders impossible, the existence of the spiritual. Their doctrine sets forth that outside matter there is nothing. The new facts, however, have received no attention from them, and without examination their very existence as facts has been denied, notwithstanding their direct bearing upon the question they (say Tyndall, Huxley, and others) claim to have so completely settled.

Opposition is to be expected and desired. Thereby error is elimi-

\* See *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, by W. Crookes; *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, by Alfred Russell Wallace; *From Matter to Spirit*, by S. de Morgan, &c., &c. Others have spoken as follow:—

But even in the most cloudless skies of scepticism I see a rain-cloud, if it be no bigger than a man's hand: it is modern Spiritualism.—*Lord Brougham*.

The world at large ridicules that which it does not understand. . . . That spiritual phenomena exist, any man possessed of common sense can prove for himself by experiment.—*Cromwell P. Varley*.

I have tried to find out how they (phenomena) are done, but the more I studied them, the more satisfied was I that they could not be explained by mere mechanical trick. I have had the fullest opportunity for investigation.—*Lord Lindsay*.

And this fact of Spiritualism will yet be grasped as with a death-bed clutch of the delivering hand that reaches down to lift us into new life.—*Gerald Massey*.

I am perfectly convinced that I have both seen and heard, in a manner which should make unbelief impossible, things called spiritual, which cannot be taken by a rational being to be capable of explanation by imposture, coincidence, or mistake.—*Professor de Morgan*.

nated, and the truth sooner or later made plain. Slipshod handling like this, however, is neither fair to the subject under consideration, nor dignified in the objectors thereto.

The phenomenal evidences of a continued existence, which Spiritualism supplies, do not interest those who have rejected all belief in a future life, because in their researches they have come across no facts which demonstrate the same! Very good! Be it so. But having adopted this course, they have no right to a hearing when dealing with this question of the duality and continuity of life. By thus refusing to consider *all* the evidence relating thereto, they have thereby abdicated the honest, manly position of an impartial inquirer, and have fallen to that of special pleaders.

The credentials which Spiritualism has to offer are indisputable facts—facts as hard and stubborn as those which have been deduced for any physical science. The witnesses of these facts are innumerable, and the character of many unimpeachable. Upon this basis we may well be content to rest our *raison d'être*. Spiritualism does not fear inquiry: it has nothing to lose, but everything to gain thereby. All that it desires is a candid and honest method of investigation, and not a rough and ready mode of settlement, as too many scientists, unfortunately for themselves, have adopted.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE ATTITUDE OF THE RELIGIOUS WORLD TOWARDS MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

'Not come to destroy, but to fulfil.'—*J. sus.*

"We want

The Christ! We want a God to burn the truth  
Afresh upon the forehead of the world!  
To bring the Gospel back again."

"That which men abuse to-day,  
Men of the future will adore,  
And truth which error seeks to slay,  
Lives evermore."

SCIENCE has not been the only opponent with which Modern Spiritualism has had to cope. Far less consistent, though perhaps more vigorous in its antagonism, and undoubtedly more influential in prejudicing the minds of many against even an investigation of its claims upon their attention, has been the opposition of the religious world.

It has been denounced by each and every section of the Christian Church as Satanic in its nature and origin, evil in its tendency, and utterly subversive of the old and cherished faith of Christendom. By many it is regarded as antagonistic to the Bible, contrary to, and at variance with, all public morality—in fact, the latest device of Satan to beguile mankind from a knowledge of the truth.

If true, the impeachment is a serious one, and likely to prove a fatal objection to the reception of Spiritualism by those who value and reverence the example and teaching of Christ. I firmly believe, how-



ever, that these charges are without foundation, or, at least, that they contain but a portion of the truth.

The only way in which these charges can be met is by an intelligent appeal to the Word, and by this test are we content to stand or fall.

Pursuing this course, we learn that now, as in all times past, there are two kinds of Spiritualism—the one lawful, reverent in its attitude, and pre-eminently beneficial in its results; the other unlawful, and as irreverent and baneful. A most clear and marked distinction is drawn between the two—i.e., between neeromancy and a lawful communion with the dead. Paul refers to both. While condemning witchcraft and sorcery on the one hand, he extols spiritual gifts on the other, even going so far as to counsel the seeking of the best gifts. Thomas Shorter thus forcibly elenches this argument:—"When we are told not to believe *every* spirit, it implies that there are some spirits worthy of credence; and the exhortation to 'try the spirits, whether they are of God,' could have no point, if it did not mean that some were so, and that we should discriminate between them." To a careful reader, it is evident that *all* who held intercourse with spirits were not cursed; either by the old Jewish *regime*, or by the early Christian Church—in fact, no objection seems to have been raised to the practice, so long as it was done by lawful methods. Spiritualists believe that the modern phenomena are identical with the spiritual gifts of the Apostles. Our evidence is of the very best kind—that of actual personal experience. *That the facts are identical, we are as sure as the strongest analogy can make us.* Whether the conditions insisted on then are applicable now, in this age of the world's history, is another question.\* We believe they are not binding.

The religious world has failed to distinguish between "things that differ," and has committed itself to a course of action more calculated than anything else to weaken her already vulnerable position. *She assumes the best mode of proving the existence of Bible facts is to reject all others of a similar character!*

Let me re-state our position. The miracles of the first and second centuries are the greatest stumbling-blocks of Christendom to-day. If they were worked for the purpose of *giving* faith in Christ and the Bible,

\* The following is, perhaps, the strongest argument anent this point:—"And here I must . . . show that Christ broke the law of Moses regarding 'seeking to spirits of the dead,' so far as good spirits are concerned. This He did in a most emphatic manner. Let the reader especially note this; for it is the most remarkable case in the sacred history, because it demonstrates, and no doubt was planned by our Saviour to demonstrate, that express abrogation of the Mosaic law regarding the spirits of the dead. Christ abrogated this law by Himself seeking the spirit of Moses, the very promulgator of that law, and leading His disciples to do the same. Christ conducted His disciples—Peter, James, and John—up into the Mount of Transfiguration, and introduced them to Moses and Elias. Of Elias we need not speak, for, having been translated, he might not strictly be called a spirit of the dead; but Moses, we are told, died in Mount Nebo, and that the Lord buried him in a valley there. Yet Christ went to seek this Spirit, as if the case was studied literally. He might have commanded Moses to appear before Him in His own room; but no, as the law against seeking to the dead was to be abolished, He went to the Spirit of the great dead—to Moses, the very man who prohibited such an act by the law in question, and there, on the mount, *broke the law before his face*; and by His example taught His disciples, the future proclaimers of His new law to the world, to do the same."—*William Howitt in "History of the Supernatural."*

it is certain that they are necessary now to *restore* it. I have also insisted that, if modern Spiritual phenomena are proved to be genuine, then they become by far the strongest, indeed the only evidences in existence at the present time for the authenticity of the Gospel miracles, and an invaluable aid to Christianity in dealing with and contending against the advance of modern scientific scepticism. This basis once accepted, the Christian Church would have a sure foundation on which to stand. Dogma and blind unreasoning, and therefore unreasonable faith, would give way to actual knowledge, and her present weakness would become her greatest strength.

The much-needed evidence has, however, been rejected, and denounced as unworthy of consideration. The facts are not denied; it is simply their nature and character that are called in question.

New truth has always been inconvenient, and has ever been relegated to that most convenient of all scapegoats—the devil. Every new discovery and invention, every fresh departure in human thought has been thus disposed of.\* The printing press, the mariner's compass, the art of navigation, and, to come nearer our own times, the steam engine and the telegraph, have each and all been attributed to this source. It was the same with Christ. He was accused of working His miracles by the power of Beelzebub. Paul was told he had a devil and was mad. Luther was alleged to have been in league with the evil one, and the same accusation was brought against Wesley and Whitfield in the early days of Methodism. Such has ever been the case. The world jeers at and condemns what it does not understand, and classes as devilish that which came only to benefit mankind.

The force of this argument lies in the past, not in the present. It is a remnant of a bygone day, of an era which may be said to have closed even within the memory of those now living. Within the present century a new civilisation has sprung up in our midst,† and with the new order of things has dawned a new method of thought. It is not probable that the now daily-recurring discoveries of Science will again be denounced as proceeding from the devil, nor is it likely that any future departure in human thought and culture will be attributed to the same source. But opposition dies hard, and to this, and the fact that Modern Spiritualism had its rise in the transition period be-

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\* The elder Disraeli shows that telescopes and microscopes were, at first, denounced as "atheistic innovations, which perverted our organ of sight, and made everything appear in a false light."

† When machines were invented for winnowing corn, a dreadful outcry was raised in Scotland that it was an impious attempt to supersede God's winds, and raise a devil's wind. One Scotch clergyman refused the holy communion to all who used this 'devil's' machine. The readers of 'Old Mortality' will remember the indignation of honest Maule Headrigg, at her son, Cuddie, having 'to work in a barn wi' a now-faugled machine for dighting the corn frae the chaff, thus impiously,' said the alarmed Maule, 'thwarting the will of Divine Providence, by raising wind for your laddyship's ain particular use by human art, instead of soliciting it by prayer, or waiting patiently whatever dispensation of wind Providence was pleased to send upon the shelling hills.'

† *The Atlantic Monthly*, for May, 1879, has an interesting article entitled "Labour and the Natural Forces," in which the writer points out "that we may take 1830 as the beginning of the new order of things;" and he then proceeds to vindicate his assertion by comparing the social life of that period with the social life of to-day.

tween the two stages of civilisation, must be attributed much of the prolonged opposition which this subject has encountered. The mills of the gods grind slowly, and not all at once does a new order of things establish itself. All progress is slow and gradual, and the influence of the modes of thought which obtained in the past were manifestly visible in the reception accorded to Spiritualism at its advent, and which it has continued to meet with until now.

Spiritualism, however, does not seek to undermine religion, or to render obsolete the teachings of Christ. On the contrary, it points out and leads by a scientific method thereto. It can evidence, illustrate, and confirm His work and words. In an age when faith is weak and hard pressed by Science, it can testify by actual knowledge, and render certain what to many minds had become doubtful. It does not ask a Christian to disbelieve his Bible, but only to understand it. It can help him when his knowledge of the original tongues, however profound, affords him no satisfactory aid; and it is only Modern Spiritualism that can bring many statements into the region of fact.\*

I cannot too strongly insist upon this. A most unpardonable misconception prevails concerning the aims and purposes of Spiritualism. It is misunderstood by the Christian Church to-day much in the same manner as was the teaching of Christ by the Jews. The Scribes and Pharisees—the chief upholders of Jewish orthodoxy—endeavoured in every way to suppress the new teaching, declaring that His object was to uproot the polity and religion of the Jews. In like manner the leaders of religious thought to-day declare that Spiritualism is subverting Christianity. “Even as men sneered at Him in the plenitude of their scorn, so do they sneer at everything new, so do they sneer at us.”

The policy has been a blind one, and the future alone can show what the Christian Church has lost by it. The worst enemies of the Church, however, have ever been within her pale, and the heaviest bolts launched against the strongholds of religion have been directed by her own hands.

Is this age—this scientific, materialistic age in which we live—so believing and religious that it is beyond the need of phenomenal

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\* “So far from setting aside the essential ideas of Christianity, I affirm that Modern Spiritualism has furnished illustration and rational proof of them, such as can be had from no other source, and such as should elicit the interest and joy of every professed believer in Christianity. Not only do the facts of Spiritualism demonstrate the reality of a future life, of inspiration and spiritual interpositions (miracles so-called), which are basic facts of Christianity, but it also gives us the philosophy and uses of many of the peculiar rites and practices of the Church; such, for example, as baptism, the laying on of hands, the eucharistic supper, the customs of singing and prayer in public assemblies, of fastings, of invocations of saints and angels, and many others, which have been observed for the most part traditionally and blindly. More: the facts of Spiritualism, and the laws of our spiritual constitutions which it has brought to light, illustrate and rationally confirm many of the more abstruse doctrines of the Christian system, which have been stumbling-blocks to many minds, both in and out of the Church; such as mediation, atonement, vicarious sufferings, sacrifices, salvation and justification by faith in Christ, regeneration or spiritual birth, self-renunciation or dying to live, the doctrine of the cross, the resurrection, the judgment, the divine incarnation, the divine humanity, and hence the divinity of the Christ, the divine Trinity, and the existence and agency of the Holy Spirit.”—*A. E. Newton.*



evidences of a continued existence after death, such as were vouchsafed to previous eras of the world's history? Are the indifferent so readily aroused, the scoffers confounded, and the honest sceptic converted to a lasting realisation of the reality and truth of Christ's life and work? Let us carry these vital questions further, and inquire whether Christians themselves have arrived at the Ultimate Thule of all morality and religion? Are the creeds so perfect that they can stand the searching light of day? Does the Christian Church need no spiritualising or vitalising influence to rekindle the old fervency which actuated Paul when he affirmed that he *knew* whereof he preached?

It may be that this opposition is due to the appearance of Modern Spiritualism outside the recognised "ministries of grace," and from a quarter where it was least expected? If so, may it not be that by its coming thus its influence for good will be the more marked amongst the very classes to whom it specially appeals? Certain it is that sceptics would regard new teaching from outside the pale of the Christian Church much more favourably than if it were hall-marked, or "signed, sealed, and delivered" by one or all of the many sects into which Christendom is divided.

The denunciation of the Church has frightened many an one from the subject; but the conclusion has been hasty and superficial, founded on a misconception, and the fear arising therefrom has been groundless. Sooner or later its true purpose will be apprehended, and men will know that "Spiritualism came not to lessen the triumphs of the gentle Nazarene, but to confirm, in letters of light, the truths He taught."

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE POPULAR FAITH AND THE CLAIMS OF SPIRITUALISM AS A RENEWAL OF REVELATION.

"For I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns."—*Tennyson*.

"The truth of the present is but the truth of the past,  
But each phase is greater, and grander, and mightier than the last;  
The past is ever prophetic of that which is yet to be.  
And God reveals His glory by slow and distinct degree."

THE spirit of the present age is undoubtedly against those who eling heart and soul to the past. There can be no doubt that unbelief is spreading far and wide. To all, except a small minority, faith, in the old sense of the word, is growing more and more cold and shadowy, and the ancient "miracles," once so sacred and so certain, fail to bring the conviction they once brought.

Many view this state of affairs with regret and doubt. It is lamented even by those who have gone farthest. Professor Tyndall speaks with touching energy of the change, which, since the last generation, has been taking place. "Never," he exclaims, "in the history of man, has so terrific a calamity befallen the race, as that which all who look may now behold advancing as a deluge, black with destruction, resistless in might, uprooting our most cherished hopes,



engulfing our most precious creed, and burying our highest life in mindless desolation. . . . I am not ashamed to confess that, with this virtual negation of God, the universe to me has lost its soul of loveliness. . . . When at times I think, as think at times I must, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed which once was mine, and the lonely mystery of existence as now I find it—at such times I shall ever feel it impossible to avoid the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible.”

Such is the wail of lament which comes from one of the leaders of public opinion. Well may Professor Flint take a grave and melancholy view of the situation in his last work on “Anti-theistic Theories.” He seems to think that Atheism is advancing upon us, subtle, deadly, irresistible as the east wind. In science, in literature, in philosophy it has its strenuous advocates. “It has,” he says, “in our large centres of population, missionaries who, I fear, are better qualified for their work than many of those whom our churches send forth to advocate to the same classes the cause of Christianity.”

The broad conclusions which in these days seem to be forcing themselves upon modern thought are, that the claims of science are incompatible with those of theology; that if the Bible does not entirely deny the pretensions which have been made for it, it contains nothing, at any rate, in support of them; that revelation is a myth, inspiration a fallacy, miracles impossible, and a future life uncertain and improbable.

There are those who rejoice and see in all this an assurance that Christianity can never again command the sympathies and assent of the world. I do not share this belief, for I see in our midst to-day a new element of thought, which I firmly believe to contain within itself all the bases requisite for a reconciliation between the two contending schools.

The subject is one upon which is based the whole question of moral and religious belief and practice; and in dealing with it, though desiring to speak plainly, would fain wound the susceptibilities of none.

I look around me, and I see the Christian Church has persisted, and still persists, in teaching a rigid and unscientific theology, through which she finds herself in collision with modern thought. I see her divided and at variance with herself. She cannot agree upon the facts and doctrines which she is fighting for—cannot even demonstrate the facts she brings forward as evidence. I see that the researches of science have hitherto been met with dogmatism and denunciation, and cannot but feel that they do not answer the question or aid the cause of truth—indeed, I see such a course making matters worse, and more completely severing the sympathies of the people from the old faith. Science is resolute, and perhaps too self-confident, but contumely and abuse will certainly not avail.

But the matter does not end here, nor does the solution of the difficulty rest with Science and the theology of the Popular Faith alone.

Modern Theology may fail to stand its ground, but the truths taught and exemplified by Jesus never. They were founded on an absolute fact; and to-day, in Modern Spiritualism, many see a renewal

of the revelation which demonstrated beyond the possibility of doubt the relationship which the present life bears to that of the future, showing that nothing is lost in the passage through death, and that the limitations which belong to earthly existence are not extended to the future order of things. They see in the present upheaval of thought a sign that the last cycle of revelation is waning to its close, and that a renewal thereof is being given to a race which needs a fuller and clearer knowledge of God and immortality. "Doubtless, the fogs and mists of deceit and error do hang around the truth. But what of that? Has it not always been so? Has God ever saved man the trouble of gaining truth by experience?"

The facts of the Gospel, and the teaching of Jesus Himself, have been obscured and lost sight of in the dogmas and traditions of men. If we go to the fountain-head, we find there truths which will serve for all time, and which contain the elements of a progressive and ever-developing faith. If, however, we find that the doctrines of Paul, or Peter, or John, conflict with the recorded teaching of the Master, let us cling to the latter, even though in doing so we have to discard many a venerable belief. The truth is undoubtedly eternal, but not so our interpretation thereof. Three hundred years since we revised the creed of the Church, and why should we not do so again in the face of the fact that our present teaching, instead of leading men to Christ, is driving them away. Our views of eternity are inconsistent, dishonouring to God, and impossible of credence, and we shall do well to consider whether the Christianity of to-day is the Christianity of Christ.

I know there are not a few to whom the grand old story of revelation comes home in all its fulness and power, into whose minds doubt has never entered, and to whom unbelief is unknown. It is well with such, and I would not for a moment disturb their faith. But, on the other hand, there are those whose numbers are large and increasing, and whose influence is undoubted, for, and in whom the old faith is fading away—its influence upon their daily life and thought fairly gone. No one will deny their earnestness. They are hard thinkers; they lead public opinion, and in doing so they wield an immense influence either for weal or woe. At present the weight of their opinion tends towards an atheistic materialism, which, fostered under their care, is sweeping broadcast through the land.

I am no alarmist, but one cannot close one's eyes to the destructive criticism of modern thought, and I merely state the position of affairs to show that a renewal of revelation is required now, perhaps even more than it was required in the olden time. We need a renewal of revelation to-day to prove that the supreme fact of the old revelation, the fact of immortality, is an actual living truth, to re-assure us of the power of prayer, the presence of God, the reality of the future life. We need it to carry conviction of God and immortality, to quench our doubts, to renew our faith by knowledge, to revive our hopes, to cast aside our fears of death and the grave, and to vitalise our creeds.

Spiritualism can do this, and more; and not a few have felt its blessed power. It has, through God's blessing, been the means of re-

storing peace of mind to many a doubting one, who, in passing from blind faith in a book hallowed by early associations, and accepted without question to the extremes of doubt, saw nothing to love and admire in God, no beauty in life, and no hope for the future. All that, however, is changed now; and there are thousands who have had such experiences. If Spiritualism has done nothing more, it has certainly done this: "It has revealed to us a Divine Deity instead of a glorified humanity. It teaches a pure, ennobling Gospel of human progress, aided by divine love, expressed through Spirit-messengers—'ministering angels, sent forth to minister to those who are heirs of salvation.' It paints a rational hereafter of progress in knowledge and growth in perfection—a future of work and usefulness, not of idle, dreamy inactivity. It supplies the best incentive to hope here by teaching that the soul must remedy hereafter the result of present sin; that conscious transgression of known laws entails disease, and shame, and punishment—punishment of which the burden is laid on the back of the offender, and must be borne by him alone. It supplies the best of all assurances of assistance in the bands of the angel-guard who minister between earth and heaven, and cheer the progressive and help the faint-hearted. It holds out no fear of death, for it is but the portal to a wider sphere of activity, differing but in slight degree from that which the disembodied soul has quitted."

But to return. Who will say that, in the light of the present needs of the great human world, that Spiritualism has no claim to the attention of the Christian Church as a renewal of Christ's teaching, and a reappearance of the signs and wonders which He promised should distinguish the true believer? There are, however, those who have denied its claims, and who have opposed and denounced it as devilish and diabolical! Nevertheless it is destined to become the great reconciliatory agent between science and religion. It is the common ground on which in future they must unite. By its aid science will become religious, and religion scientific—on the one hand, by an extension of the researches of science into the realm of spirit, and on the other hand by a palpable demonstration of the foundation on actual facts of the great verities of religion.

It is thus that it claims to present a rational and a natural solution of the chief points on which modern thought and science have assailed revealed religion. We have seen how vulnerable the Church is. She has failed often in the past to substantiate her position, and the general feeling is that she may fail again.

But the tide is turning, and the issue may yet be well. Spiritualism can render the Christian Church invincible. It can demonstrate to science that revelation is not contrary to and at war with nature; that inspiration is an actuality; that miracles are not violations of but occurrences in strict accordance and conformity with natural laws; that existence beyond the grave is not an illusion, but a fact—real, palpable, and tangible.

Science can raise no objection to the evidence. It is gathered from the same source and by the same means as that from and through which she herself has won all her victories—viz., that of fact and

observation. We pursue the same rigid method of investigation as she has laid down for the pursuit of other branches of human knowledge. We first make sure of our facts, and then reason therefrom to a consistent theory.

Still less, I think, can the Christian Church raise any valid objection. Yet I know that my position will be assailed and contested by those who should be the first to welcome the aid which is proffered. I shall be met by the assertion that the Bible contains the whole of the revelation of God to man. It is a venerable belief; but is it true? I think not. Indeed I consider all our evidence points the other way, and that miracles and revelation have only ceased from the time "when ignorant and unspiritual minds practically dethroned God from the government of the world, and relegated Him to an obscure heaven, from which He never issues."

Depend upon it that revelation, if needed to-day, will be given to-day. Indeed it is being given, and Spiritualism has come to lead humanity "out of darkness into His most glorious light."

Apart from the fact that any argument brought to bear against Spiritualism as a renewal of revelation can be urged with tenfold force against Christianity, it seems almost suicidal to reject the only evidence by which it can hope to convince the thoughtful mind of to-day. In spite of all this, it has been stigmatised as unneedful and unnecessary.

Unneedful and unnecessary! I hope I have shown good cause for a contrary belief. Why, the very cry of the age is for a renewal of the evidences of the past. Men would believe if they could. It is not because they will not, but because they cannot. But I need not repeat.

Looking at Spiritualism from a Protestant standpoint, there is nothing improbable in its claims; and if we examine the means and methods by which revelation has been given in the past, we shall find that a renewal of revelation is not only probable but certain.

Revelation has undoubtedly gone through a history. It was not completed at once, but has been subject to that law of development which prevails over everything that has life or existence. The stream of truth has broadened and deepened as it rolled along, passing through many minds at different periods of the world's history just in proportion as mankind were yearning for fresh light, and were prepared for its reception.

Such have ever been the dealings of God with man—ever supplying his needs, ever satisfying his deepest longings. Whenever the spiritual sky has been darkened, and when but few have been looking for the twilight dawn of a better and brighter day, the watchmen on the towers of time have discovered that God has never deserted a single human soul—that as He was yesterday, so *He is to-day, and for ever*—a never-failing fount of living inspiration. God has never in the past left Himself without a witness in the world. As the nations have sunk into gross sensuality and mental darkness, some messenger of God has arisen in "the fulness of time," and, with the Divine breath of freedom on his lips, has given utterance to new and nobler truths,



diseerning the invisible things of God—knowing, feeling, and understanding His eternal justice, wisdom, and love.

If this, then, has been the experience of the past, may we not take courage? Or must we believe that the great human world of these later days is alone bereft of the inspiration which was vouchsafed so continuously and universally in the past? I cannot think it: I know it is not so. I see the inspiration of old perpetuated to-day, and feel the presence of the "clouds of witnesses," through whom an inter-communion with the two worlds is still carried on. Our God is ever present; His inspiration ever bountiful; His revelation ever renewed. The ancient heavens are as strong as of yore; the Shckinah has not departed from the Holy of Holies, and, as in the days of Adam, Moses, and Jesus, God is faithful, and His loving care is over all. Sinai was not the only place where God revealed Himself; Samuel was not the only one to whom God spoke. He speaks now as in the days of yore, and reveals His ever-abiding presence as in the ancient days.

I know these are strong claims, and that there are those who consider them unwarranted and unproved. Let such bear with me awhile, and I hope to add link to link until the chain of evidence is complete.

The claims of Spiritualism as a renewal of revelation are of at least equal force to those urged by Christianity in support of its supplementary relationship to the Jewish ritual and *regime*. Our evidences are stronger, more convincing, and more numerous. As Christ refused to be bound hand and foot by the traditions of a people whose living inspirations had died into history ages before, so we decline to stagnate in the dead past of the creeds while we can bask in the glowing light of a living and present inspiration.

Like the Nazarene, Spiritualism comes not to destroy any law, or to undervalue any inspired utterance; on the contrary, it bears witness to the truth. The central feature of Christ's teaching, and the fact to which His whole life led, was the immortality of life brought to light. Spiritualism does not destroy that truth: it re-affirms it, gives it broader utterance, deeper and wider signification. To deny it would be treason to our own experience.

The revivification of the central fact of Christ's teaching, and the enlargement of its nature and uses, is but the natural complement to human progress. The truth was in danger of being lost, and a widespread need was felt for its re-utterance and re-assertion.

The probability of a renewed revelation may thus be proved from a comparison of God's dealing with mankind in the past, and its *absolute certainty* from a distinct and emphatic promise of Christ.

Its probability and possibility have, I think, been partially established by the foregoing examination of human needs. Let us, however, look a little more closely, and we shall see a striking parallel between the past and present.

One of the universal tendencies of the human mind is to settle down into a disbelief of progress in religious thought. The old revelation is deemed the final one, and any attempt to enlarge its boundaries or extend its influence is regarded with suspicion and mistrust. Old and cherished habits of thought are ever unwillingly thrown aside, and

laws, customs, and institutions often drag on long after the spirit which once animated them has fled.

The Jews imagined that their peculiar system of religious thought, with its cramped ordinances, its forms, its ceremonies, and its temple worship, so totally unsuited to other outside nationalities or other periods of time, was the final revelation of God to man. All the world, thought the Jew, would be brought to acknowledge the Jewish ritual and economy, and the worship of God would concentrate itself at the Temple of Solomon at Jerusalem. The echoes of Malachi's prophetic voice, however, died away, and four hundred years elapsed, at the end of which period but few were looking for the signs of a new revelation. But though unexpected, uncalled for, and considered unneedful, a fresh voice from heaven was heard proclaiming the universality of God's presence amongst men, and the near relationship of the natural and spiritual worlds. Jesus heralded a nobler and grander faith, revealed the possibility of a newer and truer experience, exemplifying it both by word and work. The new faith grew out of and developed from the old Jewish *regime*, widening out its forms, enlarging its creed, and unloosing the bonds and fetters which had been cast around human life and thought.

The Christian Church, however, soon forgot its supplementary relationship to the Mosaic revelation, and eventually subsided into a firm belief in the finality of the teachings of Christ. The idea of any addition to or revised interpretation of the Bible is to-day repudiated with horror, and loud and indignant are the cries of alarm which are raised when such a procedure is hinted at.

Notwithstanding this, Spiritualism has come, claiming to add new lustre to Christ's teaching—to enlarge its capacities and extend its influence. Spiritualism is not more startling to the religious world to-day than was the gospel of Jesus to the orthodox Jews. They were scandalised then by the new light which was thrown upon their ritual and ceremonial observances, and in fear they exclaimed—Who dares to question our most holy and ancient faith? Who disputes the sufficiency of the law and the prophets? The parallel is complete. To-day the same cries are heard—the same objections raised.

Both Judaism and Christianity are regarded as of divine origin. The Christian Church, however, by following the latter, virtually admits that instruction given at one period of the world's history to one particular people does not necessarily suffice for all times and peoples. It is true that life and immortality were brought to light by Christ's teaching, but it is a mistaken idea that Christ added anything material to the stock of human knowledge with regard to the nature of that life. The bare enunciation and demonstration of the duality and continuity of life was sufficient for the time. The thought was so transcendent in itself that, had more been revealed, it would probably have been passed by as beyond the apprehension of the mind of man.\*

I have shown that a re-assertion of this central truth is necessary.

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\* Jesus himself gives a similar reason for not revealing the whole of the truth. There were many things which He left unsaid to His disciples—"because ye cannot bear them now."

The Church relies upon the history alone of what took place 1800 years ago as a foundation for its belief in immortality. Hence the weakness of that belief and the awful fear of death and the grave which fills with speechless agony the vast majority of mankind whenever the hand of death is laid upon the loved ones. The Church to-day fails to apprehend the real lesson of the resurrection, and the gospel of life has been beclouded and dimmed by the traditions of men until Christian faith has been all but falsified in the presence of death.

To banish this fear and to restore faith by supplying absolute knowledge of the life beyond the grave, has Spiritualism come, re-asserting the reality of the basic fact of Christianity, and also supplementing it by revealing the nature of the life beyond.

It now only remains to notice CHRIST'S PROMISE OF EVER-RENEWED REVELATION. I shall do so briefly, and I cannot do better than quote the words of one who gave much mature thought and consideration to this point. I refer to Robert Dale Owen. He says—"If there be one distinct promise made by Jesus to His followers, it is, that spiritual signs should follow those who believed in His words; that they should do the works that He did, and greater works also; that His disciples could not bear the whole truth, so that He had to leave many things unsaid; and that after His death that Spirit which pervaded His life—the Spirit of truth—should still bring comfort, communicating with them even unto the end of the world; mediately teaching them what He had left untaught. So also Paul. Can injunction be more positive than His to seek after Spiritual Gifts?"

In this is our justification: in Christ's promise our assurance.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE NEW BASES OF BELIEF.

"They cry: 'He comes—

The signs are sure—all lands are armed for war—  
The mystic number is fulfilled. He comes!'"

"Jesus, that once in earthly garb on earth bore mortal pain,  
In humble guise, yet mighty power, is on the earth again.  
Again the blind receive their sight, again the sick are healed,  
Again to mortal eye and ear the inner life's revealed,  
Again through barred and bolted doors the heavenly guest appears,  
The hands are clasped again with those we've thought as dead for years.

"This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; and in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."—*Isaiah in Hebrew Scriptures.*

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."—*Paul in a letter to the Church at Thessalonica.*

SPIRITUALISM presents to the present age a new basis of belief, and one withal strictly in harmony with the spirit of the times, with its broader thought and its finer charity towards honest differences of opinion. Thoughtful minds are beginning to recognise that the old theology, so exclusive and selfish, is doomed, and that so long as Christendom insists that blind faith is superior to reason, that theories are of more importance than facts, so long will an impassable and hourly

widening gulf intervene between the Popular Faith and the sympathies of the great human world to which it is preached.\* Men are beginning to think for themselves now as they never thought before; they are examining their creeds with the same stern common-sense as they bring to the consideration of questions connected with everyday life, and in the course of their inquiry they are discovering much that is incredible to all who care to exercise their minds as well as their hearts about that which they believe. But there is no halting-place half-way. They must either recede or go forward; and many, having once tasted the sweets of emancipation from credal bonds, are boldly stepping over much of the intermediate theology of Calvin, St. Augustine, and Paul, to the direct teachings of the founder of their faith, and in doing so have discovered

"How unlike the Churches are to Christ."

#### THE UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCE WHICH SPIRITUALISM HAS EXERTED UPON THE CHURCH.

Unconsciously the heart and intellect of the Christian Church has been educated and influenced by Spiritualism to an extent little dreamt of by those who have not read between the lines of the religious history of the past quarter of a century. Taking the pulpit utterances of this years since, and comparing them with those of the present, it will at once be seen how much the theology of to-day has been modified and softened down. Witness the change of front which has taken place with regard to many a doctrine which was once held as absolute truth, e.g., the doctrine of "eternal torment," and more latterly, that of the nature of the resurrection body.† It is not a little significant, as a

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\* The Rev. Baldwin Brown, a prominent Congregational minister, has spoken as follows with reference to this point:—"The ideas of the character and methods of the Creator and Ruler of all these worlds which our theology has proclaimed have been found impossible of belief in the light of free intelligence and human sympathy and charity. The result has been a strong current of thought and feeling against religion in any form, as a narrowing and blinding doctrine, tending to put a veil between man's eyes and the truth. *So long as we persist in fighting for and promulgating incredulous dogmas, so long will this antagonism to religion, in any shape, widen and deepen.* . . . The time has come when, if the schism between Christianity and human society is not to be made final and complete, you must consent to reconsider the judgments about Divine and human things, which have been handed down to you from ages of strife and confusion, in the light of the ideas and habits which belong to our time, and which are shaping the form of the future. . . . *You must let the light of reason play upon Revelation and unveil its meanings.*" The italics are my own. And this is a specimen of similar utterances which I could quote by the score, from the recorded words of clergymen belonging to almost every denomination. This must, however, suffice.

† I need not quote instances of the former of these doctrines being given up. They are so numerous now that even those who only superficially notice the history of religious thought must be well aware of many such cases. With regard to the latter doctrine, I append a few extracts from an article which I published in the *Psychological Review* for July, 1879, and which reviewed a sermon which had been delivered by the Rev. J. Baldwin Brown, a Congregational minister whom I have already mentioned. I said:—

Mr Brown stands in the foremost ranks of the advanced Christian thought of the day. He has already given up as utterly untenable the doctrine of eternal torments—believing not in the destruction of sinners, but of sin. He has now spoken on the Resurrection and questions connected therewith, and it is pleasing to find that his conclusions are almost, if not quite, similar to those held by many intelligent



sign of the direction of the current of modern thought, to note how many of the most prominent preachers of every denomination have given up as utterly untenable and incredible the former, and as regards the latter doctrine, not a few are now boldly proclaiming the spiritual nature of the resurrection in contradistinction to the theory of a physical rehabilitation after death.

All these changes and modifications are in the very direction which Spiritualism has indicated from the first, and are fairly traceable to its influence—an influence which, I think, will be brought to bear more and more upon the Christian Church, as a vitalising and spiritualising

spiritualists—in fact, there is very little in the entire sermon to which exception could be taken, and, if space permitted, the whole discourse would be well worthy of a place in these pages. The italics in the extracts are my own.

With reference to the purpose of the Resurrection, he says:—"The Lord had to reveal Himself at once and substantially as a being of two worlds. And this was an absolutely new and transcendent thought. *There was nothing in the mind of the Apostles, or of any one, which could have led to the conception of it—a man perfect in all the attributes of humanity, a man as really and substantially as they were men, moving about among them in this material world as if He belonged to it, and yet manifestly not belonging to it; but at home, as they were at home on earth, in the invisible, celestial, eternal world.*"

"They could have understood a man coming back through the unclosed gates of Hades, and taking his place once more as a child at home by the world's hearth-fire, for they had seen it. Not once only the grave had given back its dead at the Saviour's bidding; not once only had they seen 'a man raised up by Christ,' taking his place and doing his work once more among his brethren of the human race. Or they could have imagined a glorious Celestial Prince appearing in his splendour to set up his kingdom, to compel the homage of every knee, the confession of every lip; and to fulfil thus the cherished dream of the nation and of their own longing hearts. They might have pictured to themselves the Man of Sorrows returning to the work of this life in the old sad form of His humiliation; or the Apocalypse of the reigning Messiah coming with His angelic legions to restore the kingdom, and to bless, by conquering and ruling, the world. *But this vision of the Man of two worlds, at home with them in the flesh, touching them, moving, speaking, eating, drinking before them, and yet with an awful atmosphere of the celestial and eternal state around Him, which they felt trembling in their most familiar intercourse, was a thing quite out of the range of their imagination; and it brought an absolutely new idea and power to bear upon mankind.*"

The ideas current at the time as to the nature of the life beyond the grave were exceedingly vague and uncertain. The Jews could not conceive of the spiritual world as being one as visibly and tangibly real as the world of our daily tasks; to them it was more or less shadowy and unreal, and Mr. Brown has here very clearly indicated the true import of the re-appearance of Jesus as an indestructible spiritual man. He came thus to convince the disciples that as He was so should they be. *As a man had He passed through the portals of death, and as a man did He return to them.* It is also evident that Mr. Brown has abandoned the current idea of a physical resurrection. No other interpretation can be placed on the above passages. He states, by implication, that Jesus did not come back, like Lazarus, in the old physical body; and further on he says, the disciples "*might have pictured the Man of Sorrows returning to the work of this life in the old sad form of His humiliation;*" but they did not. We are not, however, left in any doubt as to his meaning:—"It was not a bloodless, bodiless ghost, which was the only shape in which the dwellers in Hades represented themselves to their imagination; it was not an angel, but a living, breathing human form, substantial, palpable, tangible; a man whose body was yet superior to the conditions of this mortal flesh, and moved and wrought with the powers and prerogatives of an inner and higher world." Nothing can be plainer than this. He continues:—

"The idea which the Lord sought to develop, the truth which He sought to reveal, during those wondrous forty days in which 'He showed Himself alive after His Passion, by many infallible proofs,' and 'spoke of the things which concern the kingdom of God,' was the essential oneness, the close association and inter-penetration of the two worlds. *He came to abolish death; to show that there was but a veil between the two great chambers of the temple of man's life and destiny. This was the essential idea. He came to destroy death, and him that had the power of death—that is, the devil—by*

agency, until its theology is purged of all that is contrary to reason and common-sense.

Very rapid are the strides which are now being made; and it has been more than once suggested, that if the leading exponents of each of the denominations could meet their supposed enemies of the liberal schools, and compare their views of the Bible, and what they now deem to be the essential articles of religion, with those of their heretical friends, they would doubtless be greatly amazed to find themselves so nearly in fellowship with their infidel neighbours; and the heretics might be equally astonished to find themselves so unexpectedly orthodox.

*making it manifestly the minister of progress; the step by which the being passes up with all its glorious endowment of faculty into a larger, more glorious, more blessed world. He sought to abolish death by making man closely and dearly familiar with that which lies beyond death; revealing it as the home of the children, the meeting-place of the brethren, the field of the full and joyful play of all the human faculties and powers. And so He visibly, so to speak, lived in two worlds, and passed from the one to the other constantly and familiarly in their sight. He was never more at home with them than when He joined Himself to them as they journeyed to Emmaus, and was 'known to them in the breaking of bread' as He vanished out of their sight; or as He stood over against them on the shore of the blue Galilean Sea, and hid them let down their nets for a draught. It was their Friend, their Brother, their Master, just as they had known Him, as they followed His steps along the streets of Jerusalem or the pathways of Galilee. He had forgotten nothing of the old and dear association, but by a hundred tender touches He recalled it in that new and wondrous season of intercourse with them, while He haunted the scene of His passion ere He still passed up for ever to His glorious throne. It was the same Jesus; they never questioned it for a moment. He might have come back, as Lazarus came back, to take His homeless place at their head once more.*

"And yet! and yet! a strange and till then unknown awe invested Him. He came like a Spirit out of the unseen, and vanished like a Spirit into the unseen again. But still all His interest was about earth and earth's life, and about the work that must be done in it by His disciples in His name, that it might be saved and blessed. Fresh from the vision of the ineffable glory, He had the man's full interest in everything human; and in them as His dearest and most trusted comrades and friends. It was the Lord, the Lord as they had known and loved Him; but the Lord, already a citizen of the world of their dreams and hopes. He sought to make this earthly life seem spiritual, and that heavenly life seem home-like to the dwellers in the flesh. The thought was a divine one, and it was divinely expressed by word and by work in that season of intimate yet awful communion with the disciples, which we may regard as the marriage festival of two worlds."

Another instance is the following:—

The Rev. Joseph Cook seems to have come out pretty emphatically for "the spiritual body," according to Modern Spiritualism. He writes:—

"*A Spiritual body!* That is a phrase we did not expect to hear in the name of science. It is the latest whisper of science, and ages ago it was a word of revelation. I believe that it is a distinct biblical doctrine that there is a spiritual body, as there is a natural body, and that the former has extraordinary powers.

"It is a body which apparently makes nothing of passing through what we call ordinary matter. Our Lord had that body after His resurrection. He appeared suddenly in the midst of His disciples, although the doors were shut. . . . We must not forget that this conclusion is proclaimed in the name of the philosophy of the severest sort. The verdict is scientific; it happens also to be biblical."

All this harmonises with what Modern Spiritualism has been teaching the last thirty-one years; teaching, too, "in the name of science." But what becomes of the orthodox doctrine of the resurrection of the physical body under Mr. Cook's acceptance of these latest teachings of science? Truly that doctrine must either be discarded altogether, or explained in some Pickwickian sense, for the manipulation of which Mr. Cook is abundantly qualified. In teaching that the body in which Christ appeared to His disciples was not His physical body, but one such as Modern Spiritualism ascribes to spirits, Mr. Cook has taken a long step in advance of his orthodox brethren.—*Religio-Philosophical Journal*.

This liberal tendency is also very marked in much of the prominent preaching of the day, and from not a few we hear but of three ideas insisted upon as essentially Christian doctrines—a belief in God—in a future life—and a just retribution for sin—the three cardinal thoughts of the Spiritual Philosophy.

I do not mean to say that this is the case with all, or nearly all. It is not so. Such men are still in the minority, and that a large one. But the minority is growing so rapidly into a majority, that it needs no prophet to foretell the ultimate success of the new school of thought. What I do mean is, that these advanced ideas are being taught by some of our most intellectual and hardest thinkers in matters of religion, and that hardly a week passes without some fresh instance being put on record.

I do not claim that Spiritualism has been the only factor in this new departure, although it has certainly been the most important one. A striking characteristic of the present age is its tendency to universality and generous toleration. Religion has been more or less permeated with its spirit; and, although intolerance still remains, much of its power has been removed. This tendency has, I doubt not, had a share in forming and moulding the new lines of thought; but the lion's share must undoubtedly be accorded to Modern Spiritualism, and for this reason: the spirit of the age has only touched the *theories* of religion, whereas *Spiritualism has had to deal with its facts*, and has added to the standard Christian evidences of a risen Christ its later proofs of spiritual power and return: and through this, and this alone, it is gathering into the spiritual fold the vast army of Christian Thomases and "sad, heavy-laden" materialists, who in due time will merge into the universal harmonious Church of Christian Spiritualists.

In the bases of belief established by Spiritualism, we let go much that has in the past been held *de fide*. But what of that? If the theories of the past clash with the facts and reason of to-day, so much the worse for the theories. It is no question here about Spiritualism unsettling men's minds; the unsettling has been done by other agencies, and is complete. What Spiritualism proposes to do is to build up again the citadel of faith on a stronger and more enduring basis than before—on the Rock of Reason.

#### FAITH *versus* REASON.

A basis that is in strict accord with Science and Reason is the only foundation for Faith which can be accepted to-day. Its facts must be capable of verification, and its theories rational. It will not avail again to bring forward the old parrot cry of the "pride of reason." The pride, if there be any, is upon other shoulders; and it is because Faith has in the past usurped the place of reason—shutting it out altogether—that when weighed in the balances she has been found wanting. Faith, left to itself, rapidly degenerates into credulity, and the sober lesson of experience is, that it ever requires to be guided aright by the strong, steady light of reason. "What is left for faith," says one, "if reason comes in for so large a share? I answer: Faith is still to have its proper place, the moral nature of man is still to be exalted and not



degraded by the uplifting of Reason. Faith will be the gainer and not the loser by letting Reason do its work. Reason ploughs ahead, breaks up and plants new fields. Faith will reap the harvest. Faith may often be shaken, and seemingly torn up by the roots ; but it is only to be set out in a larger place. Reason is not the destroyer but the builder of faith. It may, and indeed does, take down the old castles ; but it is only that the new and more beautiful may fill their places. The Jews, no doubt, felt it a great loss that their faith and their forms of worship could not hold and dominate the world ; but the old form had to give place to the new life of the spirit. The Church of the 17th century thought it a great loss to give up the geocentric theory of the earth and the heavens ; but it had to be done. Faith would never have passed beyond the Ptolemic theory had not Reason brought in the Copernican ; but now Faith finds herself much happier in her new and larger home of millions of suns and systems filling all the depths of space. Faith may now feel that she is being driven from her place by the doctrines of evolution and the unbounded presence and reign of law ; but she will yet sing a happier song, when, in the clearer lights of these great truths, she finds that, instead of putting God away they bring Him so constantly near that His presence fills all things—is in the air and in the light, and every form of life, and in the thoughts and hearts of men. Then shall this clinging, trusting Angel of Faith wipe the tears from her eyes, and in her broader and better vision rejoice that Reason led the way to a larger and truer trust, and to a grander and richer home."

#### THE NEW BASES OF BELIEF ARE RATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC.

The new bases of belief supplied by Spiritualism are rational, and they are also scientific. We get our facts, verify them, and then reason therefrom to a consistent theory. In this way a course is followed diametrically opposite to that which has been adopted by Theology, and with which Science has joined issue. The Christian Church had certain theories to uphold, and her facts were made to coincide with them. Spiritualism reverses this method ; by so doing joining hands with Science ; and, while putting many of the doctrines of the Christian Church on a lower basis, at the same time places them on an impregnable and surer foundation. I will leave it for others to say which is preferable—an exalted and uncertain position, constantly liable to attack without means of defence, or a lower stand-point, but one at the same time sure of defence and secure from attack.

#### SPIRITUALISM RECOGNISES THE UNBOUNDED PRESENCE OF LAW.

Spiritualism recognises the unbounded and universal presence of law. Her facts occur in conformity therewith. We, therefore, have to discard all belief in the miraculous and exceptional. This test, applied to the Bible miracles, had cut all the ground from under the feet of those who brought them forward as worthy of belief, as indicative of the reality of spirit and a future life ; and they were relegated to the limbo of the delusions and myths of the past. Here, however, Spiritualism steps in and says :—Stay your hand ; the ancient miracles are true ! They occurred in the past, for I can show you the



like to-day, which conform to the same law as that which governed those of old. Science is satisfied; here is evidence she cannot reject; it contains no flaw. Is not this something gained? The credibility of the Bible miracles was utterly gone: the foundation on which they rested, swept away. Spiritualism has restored them to the Church, and has built up their credibility anew, on a foundation which cannot be displaced. It is true it is less exalted, but on the other hand it is rational and sure.

#### SPIRITUALISM DISCARDS THE INFALLIBLE.

So, again, with the infallible. The Church assumed that at the Reformation she emerged into absolute truth, as to the doctrines taught in the Bible, at the same time investing it with an infallibility which it never claimed for itself. As a consequence, history has revenged itself by giving it the lie ever since. If we must receive the infallible, let us, at least, clearly understand what it means, and the ultimate to which it tends. Let us admit, as we may readily do, that *a direct revelation from God is infallible*; yet it has been given through fallible agencies, and, as Robert Dale Owen points out, "This infallible revelation, long existing in detached portions, was committed for unenlightened centuries to the custody of fallible men—was translated by fallible men, at first, into Latin, and after a thousand years more into modern tongues; was gradually separated by fallible men from apocryphal matter; was finally adopted more than 350 years after the crucifixion by a Catholic Œcumenical Council and a Catholic Pope, who announced the books that should be included in the Canon, authenticating the whole as the Word of God; and finally has been interpreted, and is interpreted to-day, by fallible Churches, who differ grievously in their several constructions of its meanings."

Weighted with such a claim, it is no wonder that the Bible fails to command the intellectual assent of the age. Here, again, Spiritualism comes forward with a new theory of inspiration, strictly in harmony with Modern Culture. This I have discussed in a later portion of this work.

The new bases are not only scientific and rational, but they are also in accord with the truths taught by Jesus.

#### CHRISTIANITY, A NEW ERA IN HUMAN HISTORY.

The advent of Christianity was the commencement of a new era in the history and destiny of the human race. The great problem of the universe—the question of man's immortality—then and there received a solution practical and palpable; the shadows overhanging the tomb were dispersed, and the gates of Death shown to be the portals of Life. It was not an *idea* or *theory*, but an *actual fact* that was then disclosed—the spiritual nature and indestructibility of Life itself. This was the central fact and basis of the Gospel, the good news which was to be universally proclaimed. That the new revelation of facts in the experience of man was a joyful message, may be well conceived.

Standing at the head of the visible creation, man had found himself face to face with an experience, the significance of which was unknown among all the inferior orders of being. The panorama of life fitted

across his vision, and all around was heard the groaning of creation, and the sublime lament of things that died. He saw the brute creation play and bask beneath the shadow of death; he alone was filled with a shuddering dread at its approach. It placed itself in the forefront of every life, closed every vista, rounded every pleasure, and cast a chilling shadow over life's sunniest passage. Beyond was a seemingly impenetrable darkness; and well might the thought rise, that if nothing lay in the future, into whose unknown realm his fellows were ever passing, life was not worth the living, and was at best but a struggling, sobbing, hopeless failure. Mingled with a despairing indifference, such sentiments as these possessed the world at large at the dawn of the Christian Era; the time was ripe for an open and universal announcement that the highest interests of humanity lay, not in the corruption and sensuality of earth, but in the higher and purer life that lies beyond the veil. The whole world was sunk in the deepest mental night, and men writhed in despair as they lay in the awful shadow of death, without hope or aspiration for the future.

Truly were life and immortality brought to light by Jesus. He revealed an absolutely new and transcendent thought. He had passed through the portals of death, and returned as a living soul to tell men of the life, real and tangible, that lay beyond. It was not a world of shadows, vague and uncertain, but a world as palpable and substantial as that in which they were living. Man was then and there revealed as a being of two worlds. By the re-appearance of Jesus as an indestructible, spiritual man, He convinced them that as He was, so should they be. As a man He had passed through the portals of death, and as a man did He return to them. His whole career was an open evidence of the power of the life that lay beyond the body; and by His death and re-appearance He destroyed the power of death, and dispersed the shadows overhanging the grave.

The world's needs and longings were satisfied, and the New Faith made rapid progress so long as the glad Gospel of life was preached in its fulness and simplicity. The influence of the new truth was plainly discernible wherever it was proclaimed. No wonder that Paul of Tarsus was a changed man, both in name and character, by his personal interview with the spirit of Jesus as he was journeying to Damascus. It supplied him with all the assurance and consolation he had in the world, and so impressed was he, that he reiterated to the death this story of "one Jesus, which was dead, but who is alive."

#### THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

This was the Gospel, the good news which Jesus instructed His disciples to preach diligently everywhere. To this fact, the bringing to light of life and immortality, did the Apostles ever appeal. It was the key-note of all their thought and action—their only hope. "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ is not raised, your faith is vain."

That the dead lived, and could return, was the great faith article of the early Church. It is everywhere emphatically and earnestly asserted. Jesus had appeared not to one, but to many,—“showing

Himself alive after His passion, by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Without a single exception, this truth is always included and put forward as the most important point in every statement of the Gospel, and its influence entered largely into all that the Apostles said or did. Were it not true, reasoned Paul, who felt the full power of its force and uses, then of all men "are we the most miserable;" for there was no hope for the early asserters of what to-day is a common fact—no hope for them in this world.

Such was the glad tidings in its integrity—the immortality of life brought to light. Such was the substance of Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, when the presence of the Master was so visibly and tangibly made manifest, and which is the first recorded utterance of the Apostles of the New Faith. Prefacing his discourse with the prophecy of Joel, as to the ultimate universal outpouring of the Spirit, he proceeded to affirm the reality of the spiritual nature and existence of man, as evidenced in the life, teachings, and martyrdom of Jesus of Nazareth—"a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs." And, behind the scholasticisms of Paul and the metaphysics of John, can be discerned this same affirmation—"Because I live, ye shall live also;" and, finally, in that wonderful book of visions, the Revelations, Jesus is still represented as impressing upon, and arousing the Church, then fast losing sight of the great verity of the Gospel, to a full sense of its power and influence, for the uplifting and redemption of the world. "I am He that liveth, and was dead: behold! I am alive for evermore."

For a time this truth was the Polar Star of the Church, sustaining her through all the persecutions she endured. But its brightness and glory seems to have faded away into dim tradition, and to-day we find the Christian Church relying upon the mere history of the story of the Gospel, and that greatly weakened by the monstrous theories, puerile fancies, and absurd hopes which have been engrafted upon it.

To-day this basic fact of the Gospel is re-affirmed by Spiritualism. The works of Jesus, what are called the miracles, were palpable demonstrations of man's spiritual nature and constitution. Being witnesses of like facts ourselves, we do not deny the truth of the record; we simply place the ancient miracles amongst the normal experiences of mankind, rescuing them from the grasp of Materialism, and binding both Ancient and Modern Spiritualism in a bond of mutual uses, for both are identical, and both represent the foundation principle of the Gospel or "glad tidings" of Christ.

#### A CREED HAS BEEN MISTAKEN FOR THE GOSPEL.

The great difficulty is, that Modern Theology has mistaken a creed, or a bundle of theological ideas, for the Gospel. There is nothing in the Popular Theology that can be called glad tidings. It is hostile to man, for it teaches that "he is the child of the devil, meet only for damnation." The picture it presents of God is terrible; its representation of His attributes devilish. The popular idea of God is of a Being capricious, cruel, grotesque, and awful—veritably a human fiend, with

human passions and desires, but without a single redeeming human virtue. And this is presented as the teaching of Jesus—of Him whose name is Love, who is Love itself. Ah! the love has truly been eclipsed by fear, and a vision of the vast mass of mankind, passing out into an eternity “of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth,” has been kept studiously before the eyes of men, as a powerful means of impressing the ungodly, to terrify them, and drive them through fear to seek safety within the fold. In the place of the sympathy and love of Him whose heart yearned towards all men, an indifferent, inhuman spirit of recklessness has been fostered with regard to the fate of those who die hardened in sin. One of the arguments used against the adoption of “the larger hope” for the future of the great human world has been, that if progress is the divine order through the long ages of eternity, “saints” would one day have to sit down with those whose names are now held in Christian execration!!

In all things essential, Spiritualism and Primitive Christianity are one. Around their central facts are clustered a golden galaxy of truths. Taking the authentic utterances of Jesus, His teaching may be summed up in Reverence, Sympathy, Purity, and Love. His mission was emphatically one of blessing to humanity at large, and He showed how all might be saved. Spiritualism clears away the glosses and deductions of ritual and speculation which have gathered around His life and work, and more clearly reveals the divine truths underlying the same. “He reasoned of Life and Death and Eternity; of the true nobility and dignity of man’s nature; of the way to progressive knowledge of God. He came as the great fulfiller of the law; the man who showed, as never man showed before, the end for which the law was given—the amelioration of humanity. He taught men to look into the depths of their hearts, to test their lives, to try their motives, and to weigh all they did by the one-ascertained balance—the fruits of life, as the test of religion. He told men to be humble, merciful, truthful, pure, self-denying, honest in heart and intent; and He set before them a living example of the life that He preached. He was the great social reformer, whose object was at least as much to benefit man corporally, and to reveal to him a salvation from bigotry and selfishness, and narrow-mindedness in this life, as it was to reveal glimpses of a better life in the hereafter. He preached the religion of daily life, the moral progress of the spirit in the path of daily duty, forward to a higher knowledge. Repentance for the past, amendment and progress for the future, summed up most of His teaching. He found a world buried in ignorance, at the mercy of an unscrupulous priesthood in matters religious; under the absolute sway of a tyrant in matters political. He taught liberty in both, but liberty without licence; the liberties of a responsible spirit with duties to God and to itself; of a spirit corporally enshrined with a corresponding duty to its brethren in the flesh. He laboured to show the true dignity of man. He would elevate him to the dignity of the truth, the truth which should make him free. He was no respecter of persons. He chose His associates and His apostles from the mean and poor. He lived amongst the common people—of them, with them, in their homes, teaching them



simple lessons of truth which they needed and could receive. He went but little among those whose eyes were blinded by orthodoxy, respectability, or so-called human wisdom. He fired the hearts of His listeners with a yearning for something nobler, better, higher than they yet possessed, and He told them how to get it." \* How strikingly all this contrasts with the policy of the sects who practically narrow and limit the grace of God to a few.

Spiritualism is preaching the same evangel as that of Jesus, and (I quote from the same source again), "it brings forth the spirit of truth from the grave in which man has buried it, and would tell to the listening souls of men that it lives still; the simple yet grand truth of man's progressive destiny, and of God's increasing care, of the spirits' unslumbering watch over incarnated souls. Our mission is the continuation of that old teaching which man has so strangely altered—its source identical, its course parallel, its end the same."

#### SPIRIT TEACHING.

In the following brief outline of spirit teaching I am conscious of but imperfectly expressing the chief points of the new departure, and it is merely put forward suggestively. To those who go no further than the surface it will doubtless appear rank heresy. Well! it may be permissible so to call it; but that it is wide of, and contrary to, the teaching of Jesus, I am by no means prepared to admit. That it contravenes much that Christians have agreed to hold *de fide*, I will allow. At the same time, however, I cannot assent to the assumption that Modern Christianity rightly interprets and apprehends the full meaning of Christ's teaching. Heresy the new teaching doubtless is: new truth has ever been so called. But the heresy of to-day is the popular faith of to-morrow. The teaching of Jesus was rank heresy to the orthodox Jew, even as Spiritualism is rank heresy to the orthodox Christian. Jesus, Paul, Luther, and the whole array of earth's reformers were heretics to the times in which they lived, and we need by no means be ashamed of our company.

The new teaching is not urged as dogma: every one is left to receive or reject at will. It is not introduced with a "thus saith the Lord," or advanced as absolute truth. Spirits are but disembodied human beings, and being human, are liable to error. Reason must ever be made the test of revelation—whether ancient or modern. In substance, spirits teach something as follows:—Of

#### GOD

they do not speak as a personality, nor have they met with any other spirits, however exalted in position, who have ever seen God, according to the common acceptation of the word. But they say there is a God who is incomprehensible to man, who is known by His works, whose name is Love, and whose attributes are Wisdom, Truth, and Justice.

He is everywhere, and pervades all space. He is the life-principle, and manifests in various ways that will take an eternity to discover. They say that He shows Himself in everything that the eye can behold.

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\* From "*Spirit-Teaching*," given through the mediumship of M.A. (Oxon).

He is beyond all searching out ; yet He is in all men. He is one, and has no fellow ; and is the Father of all spirits, of all creatures. He alone is wonderful ; and there is none other wonderful besides Him. He changes not, even though all else in nature changes. He works by laws immutable, and oft by laws inscrutable to the human mind. He is Almighty, and the Author of all might and wisdom. He lives in the Eternal HERE, and His life is one Eternal Now.

## DEATH.

Death is merely the emergence of the spirit from the earthly body, and is in fact being born again into another state of existence, which is called the "invisible world," because of its not being visible to the mortal eye. Man is exactly the same after this change from the visible to the invisible world as he was before his departure, only then he has to do with realities which are eternal, whereas he now has to deal with things temporal, changeable, quickly passing away. He makes for himself his future—that as he sows, so must he reap ; if he sows to the wind, he reaps the whirlwind, and if to the spirit, he reaps eternal glory ; thus making his own heaven or hell.

## HEAVEN.

Heaven is not, as is generally believed, a city with high walls, whose foundations shine resplendently with precious stones, whose streets are pure gold and transparent glass, and whose gates are pearls, but a state of happiness whose centre is God, around whom spirits expand for ever. Heaven may be in this life as well as the next, and is in reality as varied in its aspects as the minds of men. Though it is a state of rest from sorrow and trouble, yet it is a state of continual activity. It is the home of the righteous, who enjoy its peace and joy and love. Heaven is where God is, and He is everywhere : and as He is Eternal, so is Heaven : and, being built upon holiness, it is harmony, and is open for all, being man's inheritance.

## HELL.

But if, on the contrary, man has in this life lived to himself, and neglected his best interests, when he wakes up in the next life, he will find he has been making for himself a hell, worse than the fabled fire and brimstone—a state, in fact, just the opposite of heaven in everything.

## DAY OF JUDGMENT.

His day of judgment is the day of death ; and he will then find that sin brings its own punishment, that he requires no judge sitting on a great white throne to curse him, for he has cursed himself. He will then learn that opportunities lost can never be regained, and that wherever he goes he takes his hell with him. They say that hell is a state of continual anguish and remorse—is, in fact, sin expanded.

## PUNISHMENT.

Punishment, they say, is not the vindictive act of an angry God, but is the inevitable consequence of the transgression of known laws. Sin, they say, must be conscious transgression, or it is not sin but error. Error involves loss but not punishment. They speak of their know-

ledge of man's ultimate happiness; that though some remain but a short time in this state of misery, others remain for ages before they can break through the chains of darkness which sin has forged for them while passing through time. But, sooner or later, the spirit gathers up the tangled threads of its former life, and works out its own salvation.

## MAN.

Man, though finite, is the type of nature, and, as a spark of Deity, never dies. He is progressive, and lives in the future, a masterpiece of Deity, and as an individuality, must remain such for ever. His duty is summed up as Progress, Culture, Purity, Charity, and Lovingkindness; and that, as he fulfils or neglects these characteristics of his being, so is he happy, or the reverse.

## SPIRITS.

In speaking of themselves as spirits, they say they are God's messengers or servants—that they are taught of God, and are the medium of God's will to man—in fact, the spirits of men developed. They are our guardians and instructors, and the promoters of all the good that we have. They are ever progressing and ever learning, and become more happy as they impart happiness. They are not perfect, for they must progress, as endless progression is a law of the Most High.

## RELIGION.

They teach that all men, whether Christians, Jews, or Pagans, are the children of God, and according to their works, taking their knowledge into account, shall they be happy or otherwise. God looks not to a man's faith, but to his life and motives. Religion does not consist in dogmas, laid down by priests or popes, but in feeling and doing unto others as we would wish they should feel and do unto us.

## JESUS.

They hold up Jesus as our great pattern, whose steps we are to follow, and whose actions we are to imitate. They show us Jesus as the most perfect manifestation of God in the flesh the world has ever seen. They say He was a perfect man and a wonderful medium, and that the wonders He wrought were done by the power of God manifested through Him, as similar performances are done at the present day. They point to the words of Jesus—"Greater works than these shall ye do"—to show that even His mighty deeds may be excelled. They point to the complete abnegation of self in Jesus, and how ready He was to do good to others, urging us to take pattern thereby. And now, they say, He is at the head of a vast throng in eternity, of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, who are progressing with Him onward and upward for ever.

## EVIL.

They also teach that by and by, when we get into some of the higher circles of angels, we shall then see clearly, and perceive that a great deal of what we now call evil has been a necessity for the good of the world. They urge upon us to learn to be Christ-like, to deem ourselves

servants in the service of Him, to be earnest in elevating mankind instead of owning success and trampling on weakness.

#### SPIRITUALISM, A RELIGION FOR EVERY-DAY LIFE.

Such, briefly, have been the chief points of spirit-teaching during the last quarter of a century. The religion it inculcates is emphatically one of every-day life—a religion of the body as well as of the soul—and such teaching is eminently fitted to make a man a better citizen, a better man in all his social relations. It is, above all, a practical faith; and the sun is not more liberal in its rays than is Spiritualism in its teachings. Holding the ideas of God and Immortality prominent, it, nevertheless, abrogates popery, both in Protestantism and Romanism, and gives strength to the vitality of all creeds, which is only another name for the spiritual. Thus recognising God, Immortality, Freedom in its highest sense, and Universal Love, Spiritualism rises before the world in its regenerative character, purely unsectarian, and yet all-sufficient in its influence on universal life to make man free—free from the bondage of creed and caste—and to fit him for brotherhood here and heaven hereafter.

In addition to the foregoing, I have thought it well to include here another resumé of the teaching of Spiritualism. It is perhaps more complete, and arranged more in logical sequence than the one I have given. It will be seen, however, that there is no material divergence between the two. It is extracted from the “Debateable Land,” by R. D. Owen, one of the most popular standard works upon Spiritualism.

“If, after a varied experience of sixteen years in different countries, I am entitled to offer an opinion, it is, that if spiritual communications be sought in an earnest, becoming spirit, the views presented will, in the vast majority of cases, be *in strict accordance with the teachings of Christ*—such as we may reasonably conceive these to have been from the testimony of His evangelical biographers. They touch upon many things, indeed, which He left untouched, but the spirit is absolutely identical. They breathe the very essence of His divine philosophy.

“I speak here of those ideas as to which, in all trustworthy spirit messages, there can scarcely be said to be variance of sentiment. As to side issues and non-essentials, it would seem that the same variety and uncertainty of opinion exists in the next world as in our own.

“The following may be taken as the great leading principles on which intelligent spiritualists unite:—

“1. This is a world, governed by a God of love and mercy, in which all things work together for good to those who reverently conform to His eternal laws.

“2. In strictness there is no death. Life continues from the life which now is into that which is to come, even as it continues from one day to another; the sleep which goes by the name of death being but a brief transition-slumber from which, for the good, the awakening is immeasurably more glorious than in the dawn of early morning, the brightest that ever shone. In all cases in which life is well spent, the change which men are wont to call Death is God’s last and best gift to His creatures here.



"3. The earth-phase of life which follows the death-change, is, in strictest sense, the supplement of that which precedes it. It has the same variety of avocations, duties, enjoyments, corresponding in a measure to those of earth, but far more elevated; and its denizens have the same variety of character and of intelligence; existing, too, as men do here, in a state of progress. Released from bodily earth-clay, their periscope is wider, their perceptions more acute, their spiritual knowledge much greater, their judgment clearer, their progress more rapid than ours. Vastly wiser and more dispassionate than we, they are still, however, fallible; and they are governed by the same general laws of being, modified only by corporeal disenthralment, to which they are subjected here.

"4. Our state here determines our initial state there. The habitual promptings, the pervading impulses, the life-long yearnings—in a word, the moving spirit, or what Swedenborg calls the 'ruling loves' of man—these decide his condition on entering the next world: not the written articles of his creed, nor yet the incidental errors of his life.

"5. We do not, either by faith or works, *earn* Heaven; nor are we sentenced, on any Day of Wrath, to Hell. In the next world we simply gravitate to the position for which, by life on earth, we have fitted ourselves; and we occupy that position *because* we are fitted for it.

"6. There is no instantaneous change of character when we pass from the present phase of life. Our virtues, our vices; our intelligence, our ignorance; our aspirations, our grovellingings; our habits, propensities, prejudices even, all pass over with us: modified, doubtless (but to what extent we know not), when the spiritual body emerges, divested of its fleshly encumbrance; yet, essentially, the same as when the death-slumber came over us.

"7. The sufferings there, natural sequents of evil-doing and evil-thinking here, are as various in character and in degree as the enjoyments; but they are mental, not bodily. There is no escape from them except only, as on earth, by the door of repentance. There, as here, sorrow for sin committed, and desire for an amended life, are the indispensable conditions, precedent of advancement to a better state of things.

"8. In the next world Love ranks higher than what we call Wisdom, being itself the highest wisdom. There deeds of benevolence far outweigh professions of faith. There simple goodness rates above intellectual power. There the humble are exalted. There the meek find their heritage. There the merciful obtain mercy. The better denizens of that world are charitable to frailty and compassionate to sin, far beyond the dwellers in this: they forgive the erring brethren they have left behind them, even to seventy times seven. There is no respect of persons. There, too, self-righteousness is rebuked and pride brought low.

"9. A trustful, child-like spirit is the state of mind in which men are most receptive of beneficial spiritual impressions; and such a spirit is the best preparation for entrance into the next world.

"10. There have always existed intermundane laws, according to

which men may occasionally obtain, under certain conditions, revealings from those who have passed to the next world before them. A certain proportion of human beings are more sensitive to spiritual perceptions and influences than their fellows; and it is usually in the presence, or through the medium of one or more of these, that ultramundane intercourse occurs.

"11. When the conditions are favourable, and the sensitive, through whom the manifestations come, is highly gifted, these may supply important materials for thought, and valuable rules of conduct. But spiritual phenomena sometimes do much more than this. In their highest phases they furnish proof addressed to the reason, and tangible to the senses, of the reality of another life, better and happier than this, and of which our earthly pilgrimage is but the novitiate. They bring immortality to light under a blaze of evidence which outshines, as the sun the stars, all traditional or historical testimonies. For surmise, they give us conviction, and assured knowledge for wavering belief.

"12. The chief motives which induce spirits to communicate with men appear to be a benevolent desire to convince us, past doubt and denial, that there is a world to come; now and then the attraction of unpleasant memories, such as murder or suicide; sometimes (in the worldly-minded) the earth-binding influence of cumber and trouble; but far more frequently the divine impulse of human affection, seeking the good of the loved ones it has left behind, and at times drawn down, perhaps, by their yearning cries.

"13. Under unfavourable or imperfect conditions, spiritual communications, how honestly reported soever, often prove rapid and valueless; and this chiefly happens when communications are too assiduously sought, or continuously persisted in; brief volunteered messages being the most trustworthy. Imprudence, inexperience, supineness, or the idiosyncrasy of the recipient may occasionally result in arbitrary control by spirits of a low order; as men here sometimes yield to the infatuation exerted by evil associates. Or, again, there may be exerted by the inquirer, especially if dogmatic and self-willed, a dominating influence over the medium, so strong as to produce effects that might be readily mistaken for what has been called possession. As a general rule, however, any person of general intelligence and ordinary will can, in either case, cast off such mischievous control; or, if the weak or incautious give way, one who may not improperly be called an exorcist—if possessed of strong magnetic will, moved by benevolence, and, it may be, aided by prayer, can usually rid, or at least assist to rid, the sensitive from such abnormal influence."

#### SPIRITUALISM AND THE POPULAR THEOLOGY.

In view of the foregoing, the question will arise as to the exact bearing of Spiritualism upon Modern Christianity. Clearly the new teaching does not countenance the Popular Theology; yet, as I have already said, it is not antagonistic to the teaching of Jesus. Orthodoxy does not fairly represent the spirit of Christianity, though it may well possess a rigid observance of the letter thereof. The heart of it is sound, no doubt,—that is to say, it means well, but its theology

is false in its essentials. While agreeing with the Church that man is immortal, and that his life here should be conducted in reference thereto, we know that she is greatly mistaken as to the realities of that immortality, and we believe her method of preparation for it to be unreliable.

The Church of the first century, with all its blunders, had a basis that was sound. The Apostles had seen and handled the facts they believed in. The Church of the nineteenth century has for foundation the history only of what the ancient Church knew of fact, and that greatly weakened by what it does *not* know of reason, and made utterly unsound by the scholasticism which subsequently undertook to settle matters without fact or reason. And yet, with what a conscious air of superiority we are asked, as Spiritualists, whether we have "an interest in Christ." It never troubles itself with the question as to whether Christ has an interest in *it*. It takes *that* for granted.

But, as at present constituted, it is extremely doubtful whether it can survive. Already the Popular Faith has lost its hold upon the hearts and minds of the people; and, moreover, the rival faiths of the world are standing forth in bold array, challenging each other to comparison, and especially demanding of Christianity the why and wherefore of its assumed superiority. In the far East, as Max Müller points out in his profoundly sympathetic appreciation of the religious wants of humanity, the most reverent minds are comparing the systems of Buddha, of Mahomet, and of Christ, and are inquiring with a largeness of heart that might admonish many amongst ourselves, which of them presents to man the highest, purest, and holiest conception of the Divine Being, and of the religious duties of man. The merits of each and all the world's faiths are on their trial, *and though Christ's teaching in its pristine simplicity can, and will hold its own, yet the wretched Calvinism perpetrated in His name to-day, will not and cannot compare favourably with either of the other great religions of the world.*

There is no need for alarm. Whatever of truth there is in the Popular Theology will stand. It is not the good and true we, as Spiritualists, wish to eliminate, but the untrue and the false, which the Church has incorporated as part and parcel of its charter.

That a vitalising and purifying influence is needed is plain enough; of something radically wrong, the Church stands self-convicted, self-condemned. Look where we will throughout Christendom, and we shall not find the "signs" which Christ Himself declared should distinguish the true believer. Where are the credentials of discipleship? Where are the gifts of the Spirit promised by Him who is called Lord and Master? If these signs were a test of Christian character, and a living faith in the primitive days of the Church, they are still so; and where, I ask, are those who can so prove their faith?

"Here," says one writer, "is a solemn fact to be considered: *either the Church is void of faith, or the promise of Jesus is void of truth.* In either case it is no more than charity to call the attention of Christians to this matter. This is no idle question. The whole world is concerned in it. The Popular Religion of the nineteenth century

stands convicted of either a want of faith in itself, or a want of confidence in the truth of its founder."

Spiritualism alone can throw the needed light upon such questions as these, and show why and how it is that the promised signs have disappeared from the midst of Christendom. It can also furnish proof and illustration of the leading doctrines of Christianity, such as can be had from no other source. It not only re-demonstrates the basic fact, but gives the philosophy and uses of many of the rites and practices of the Church, the true meaning of which is now either lost sight of or misunderstood. For example, Christian baptism, in one form or other, is held by many to be a *sine qua non* of church membership. Consequently, the believer is either immersed in water, or has it sprinkled on his face. But if the "Word" is to be taken as a guide, he is here entirely in error. That was not the kind of baptism which was to accompany the Gospel of Christ. The symbol of the baptism of Jesus was fire, not water—the sign of a power which should not simply moisten the surface of the understanding with a verbal assent, but which should penetrate to the very centre of consciousness, and there become a perpetual source of light and heat. Spiritualism reveals that this baptism of fire is none other than the overshadowing presence of the Spirit—as at Pentecost—a baptism of which fire is a fitting symbol. In like manner can be explained the Laying on of hands, the Lord's Supper, Singing and Prayer, Fasting, and the Invocation of Saints—all of which have been for the most part followed blindly. But in the light of Spiritualism their *rational* basis is obvious, as also the interpretation of many of the popular dogmas; as, for instance, Mediation, Atonement, Vicarious Suffering, Salvation, Justification, the Resurrection, and the Last Judgment. It is not, however, my purpose now to enter into a discussion of these points. I simply record the fact that a common-sense and rational view of Christian rites and dogmas is forthcoming.

#### IN WHAT SPIRITUALISM DIFFERS MOST FROM ORTHODOXY.

Though Spiritualism, as a science and system of ethics, is unconsciously modifying the doctrines of the Popular Faith to an extent little dreamt of, and is exerting a purifying influence, teaching men that the real power which is to control men's hearts for good is Love—Universal Love; yet the key-stone of the whole fabric of modern theology is hard to remove. It is upon this point that Spiritualism is thoroughly antagonistic to the Popular Faith. The doctrine of eternal torment hangs like a mill-stone upon the neck of the Church. This doctrine, briefly stated, is, that while a certain proportion of the human race will be "saved," the rest will pass onwards to a state whose awful horrors no tongue can describe. The future of vast myriads is a night of never-ending gloom, a night upon which no morning can ever dawn.

What the real meaning of this is will be seen in the following *precepts* of the religious faiths of the world, in which the number of those likely to be saved is computed by applying the orthodox evangelic test of "believing in Jesus:"—



Let us take the population  
of the globe, at say ..... 1,274,000,000

Now, according to popular  
theological belief, we  
must exclude all outside  
the pale of the Christian  
Church, as follows : .....

Pagan Idolaters, 793,000,000	
Mahometans, .....120,000,000	
Jews, ..... 8,000,000	921,000,000

Leaving the number of  
Professing Christians, of  
one kind or other, at..... 353,000,000

Observe, however, that the  
Idolaters amount to at  
least three times this  
number. But to be ortho-  
dox in our estimate, we  
must still further reduce  
the number of those  
likely to be saved, by the  
and also the .....

Roman Catholics, 182,500,000	
Greek Church, ... 76,624,000	259,124,000

This leaves us, the Protes-  
tant Churches, say, ..... 93,876,000  
the united members of  
which are not much more  
than one-third of the  
whole Christian Church !

Shall we stop here and take  
our 96,000,000 Protes-  
tants as the number of  
those for whom "salva-  
tion" is possible? No,  
says our inexorable theo-  
logy, you must deduct  
from these at least the...

Unitarians, .....183,000	
Mormons, .....100,000	
Swedenborgians, ..... 12,000	
Universalists, .....656,000	951,000

some would even include  
thus reducing our esti-  
mate to ..... \* 92,925,000

And, were it possible to obtain the precise number, it is more than  
likely that our total would dwindle down from millions to as many  
thousands, more especially as these figures represent *professing*  
Christians only, and not by any means those who are regarded as  
really the followers of Christ by the Evangelical section of Christendom.

These facts need no comment. It is against such horrible dogmas

\* These statistics are taken from *Chambers's Encyclopedia*, article "Religions."

as these that Spiritualism protests. Spiritualism will continue antagonistic to modern Christianity so long as the Church persists in resting her *raison d'être* upon such foundations. Spiritualism is fighting for God and man alike. *It is teaching men nobler and truer views of life and being, and that there is nothing to fear beyond the tomb, that even the punishments of an all-wise God, through His inexorable laws, are proofs of His greatest mercy, and that the worst calamity would be NOT TO fall into His hands.*

The bearing of the new teaching on this all-important point is, that no such system of punishment as that generally believed in by the Churches exists in the next world. Spirits have very little to say about hell, and they universally repudiate the doctrine of eternal retribution. Yet, though not believing in hell as a place, they tell of a punishment which is corrective, and emphatically insist that the misdeeds and wrongs done in this life must be atoned for in the next. They teach that the soul's Day of Judgment is ever here, and that sooner or later the spirit must gather up the tangled thread of its former sins and weave the lines of life afresh into garments of light and beauty with which it may clothe itself anew.

Doubtless the orthodox Christian will question the truth of all this. But it must be remembered, that though one class of passages in the Bible may be so interpreted as seemingly to endorse the "eternity of hell torments," yet there is another class to be met with in both Testaments which preach a widely different doctrine. Those that speak of God's everlasting mercy, of His not keeping His anger for ever, are as numerous and as emphatic as those which are urged in support of the contrary belief. Yet, for eighteen centuries, the Church has elected to stand by the one and not the other. And why? Because she felt it supremely important, to have the means of successfully terrifying men into the fold. No doubt she was honest; but the times have now gone by when men could be "saved" through fear.

In combating such monstrous theories as these, which the Church has unfortunately engrafted into its system, Spiritualism is fighting for the honour of God and the welfare of man. We plead for the glorious charter of life revealed by the man Christ Jesus; for the ministries signified by that redemption which He wrought from the power and sting of death. We plead for the teeming millions of our race, for those who, in our self-righteousness, we term the "wicked," and then pass on our way—for those with whom Jesus loved to dwell, and for whom His loving tenderness went out, the weakest and vilest of whom He called brethren.

Let me, again, speak a word of re-assurance. Let none fear that such teaching as this will undermine the truth. On the contrary, it strengthens and confirms it. The mission of Jesus is our own—His love our guide as we daily tread the path of duty, which widens and brightens as we travel on; and far away in the distant future we catch a gleam of the Universal Song of Triumph—the song of the ever-increasing throng of Earth's children, ransomed evermore from the toils of sin.

## CHAPTER VI.

## INSPIRATION AND REVELATION: THEIR NATURE AND SOURCE.

THE questions of Inspiration and Revelation are as yet so hedged about by prejudice that few will be content to treat them upon their merits. Those who have had the temerity to do so, and have emancipated themselves from the unphilosophical claims with which the popular view of the question is weighted, and from a slavish and degraded *letter-worship* of the Word, have been speedily consigned to the limbo of heterodoxy. The Protestant Churches honour Luther for freeing them from the errors of the Roman Church; but, unless they are prepared to issue a bull of infallibility, they should not denounce those who, in their study of Holy Writ, exercise the fundamental principle of Protestantism—liberty of thought and interpretation.

Protestantism and Romanism both agree in this—the Bible was directly inspired by God, and is in itself a source of unmixed, unerring truth. The former asserts, however, that after the first century of the Christian Era the book of revelation was completed, and the fount of inspiration closed. Roman Catholicism, on the other hand, though likewise asserting the completion of the *written* Word, still claims that the stream of inspiration has been continuously granted to the Catholic Church during the last seventeen centuries, but to no other.

As to its continuance to the present time, the Mother Church is undoubtedly correct, but not so with regard to its limitation or individualisation; while both are somewhat mistaken as to the infallible nature of the record.\*

Making due allowance for the modifications resulting from the Reformation, and which were adopted only by the Protestant Churches, this belief has for the most part but a shallow foundation. It has simply been taken for granted because it has been the teaching of the Church from the Council of Nice downwards. She has claimed for herself, and herself alone, the custody and interpretation of the written word; and, to cast a doubt upon this venerable belief is, to many, equivalent to denying Scriptural truth altogether.

## PLENARY INSPIRATION.

The belief in the Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures—the originals and King James' translation also—is tenaciously clung to by the majority of Christians. Such a method of interpretation has only led to innumerable absurdities, and has consequently been abandoned by the most intelligent Biblical scholars for a more reasonable standpoint. There is hardly any preconceived idea or position for which texts may not be found—as far as the mere letter goes—as authority. The vilest excrescences of human nature have by this means established their claims by appealing to the Bible. Interpret many passages with rigid accuracy, and without regard to context, by this doctrine of verbal inspiration, and you may convict the Scriptures of startling inconsistencies; let, however, the general tenor be taken and read in the light

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\* See previous chapter, page 47.

of a more general inspiration, and the whole is harmonious and clear of comprehension.

Modern thought, however, rules out the idea of a special revelation and inspiration. The ground upon which they are doubted—may I not go farther and say *denied*—to-day, is, that they have been regarded and believed to be miraculous and infallible in their nature and origin; and with the denial of miracles and the infallible in general, the rejection of inspiration and revelation has followed as a matter of course.

“Men postulate infallibility,” says one,\* “as a necessity. Doubtless this is so in the abstract, but in order to apprehend infallibility a man must be infallible. Hence man’s knowledge of his Creator, which is the equivalent of God’s revelation to him, is *progressive*. Who, it may be asked, decided that God’s revelation to mankind closed with the books of the Bible? Men—fallible men—like ourselves. The Bible makes no such claim for itself, and we have no more reason for supposing that God’s revelation to man is confined to the pages of the Bible than we have for believing in the infallibility of the Pope. The conclusions of such men as Cardinal Newman and Archbishop Manning are logical. The believer in a *special infallible revelation*, if he be rational and logical, is driven to find an infallible interpreter for his infallible book. Perplexed and distracted by the discordant and conflicting teachings of the various sects of Christians, he turns, it may be, sometimes in despair to the only Church which has even the appearance of being at unity with itself, a Church which boasts an unbroken line of succession from apostolic times, and claims to be a divinely-appointed authority for rightly interpreting the infallible Word of God. Here at last is peace and security! What can man want more? One lingering, loving look to the dear ones we are leaving; a plunge, and all is over! Henceforward, ‘to doubt,’ as Cardinal Newman puts it, ‘is to sin,’ and all this is the legitimate and logical issue of a belief in the infallibility of the Bible.”

#### A COMMON-SENSE VIEW.

The view which Spiritualism takes is eminently a common-sense view, though it in no way disputes either the inspiration or authenticity of the Bible. It teaches a new principle of discrimination, but at the same time places Holy Writ on a firmer, though less exalted basis. It shows the real nature and source of spiritual influx, and throwing a flood of light on the manifestation of the spiritual upon the material world, reveals the heretofore inexplicable mass of ideas and mysteries, an intelligent and intelligible record of God’s dealings through intermediate agencies with mankind. It shows that the means whereby revelation came to the prophets and seers of old are identical with the laws governing spiritual intercourse through media to-day. The prophets were instruments for the use of higher intelligences, from whom words of wisdom, grace, and truth came, as they were moved by the Spirit. So, too, are mediums influenced to write and speak that which is given to them.

\* W. W. Clark in “Forecasts of the Religion of the Future,” p 133.



## REVELATION HAS BEEN GIVEN THROUGH FALLIBLE AGENCIES.

Revelation has been and is given through fallible human agents, and, as the purest water poured into a foul cistern will flow forth more or less befouled, so the inspiration which has flowed from the lips of prophets and seers has been more or less tainted with their personal characteristics and inconsistencies. The sweetest melodies are produced from the most perfect instruments, and the higher the moral and spiritual culture of the individual, the more exalted and divine have been the words of wisdom given. Says Adin Ballou—"Even the believers in the plenary inspiration of the Bible, who contend that holy men spoke and wrote precisely as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, confess that the peculiarities of all the prophets and apostles are distinguishable in the books which bear their respective names. Isaiah and Daniel, Paul and James, it is alleged, were media through whom the Holy Ghost spake and wrote. But still there is the same difference in what came through them as in the men. Even the Holy Ghost could not or would not write through these different media, without allowing their personal mentality to peculiarise what was written."

Spiritualism teaches that this

## INSPIRATION IS GENERAL,

limited to no age, country, or nation; and that the only difference is one of degree. All men are inspired—the inspiration being limited only by the degree of receptivity and capacity. It shows that this spiritual influx is none other than the indwelling of the Spirit of God, in whom "we live, and move, and have our being." Interpreted thus it reveals the possibilities of our race, which is slowly but surely being drawn upward and heavenward by the Spirit of Truth itself.

## MEDIATE NATURE OF REVELATION.

Another important point is that the holiest truths have doubtless been given mediately, and not direct from God. The spiritual intercourse of the last thirty years has revealed the economisation of labour in the invisible as in the material world—that the universe is governed by a graduated hierarchy of spirits, much as our planet is governed, orders being transmitted from the sovereign and his chief ministers down through various grades of officials—and that, although the standard of rank and station in spirit-life are settled upon sounder principles than on earth, and considerations of intellectual and moral worth are substituted for our artificial distinctions, there is no dead level of equality there, and no more reason to believe in the direct intercommunication between the highest and the lowest, without the intervention of suitable agencies, than there is on earth. We may learn much if only our teachers are a little better informed than ourselves.

That this agrees with, and will harmonise, Bible truth is clear. We need no longer charge upon God the inconsistencies and contradictions of His agents. The truth may have, and undoubtedly has, come from its primal source, pure and undefiled; but, in transmission to man, it has become deteriorated by contact with human faults and foibles.

The truth is not defective, but simply our interpretation of it. God's truth may teach us one thing, while we conceive another. Fresh ideas must be communicated through old forms, ready to the hand—in modes of expression familiar to all.

#### THE TEST OF REVELATION.

It is clear that Revelation must be submitted to the test of reason. "Brethren, try the spirits, for by their fruits shall ye know them," was sound and good advice. On the principle of proving all things, and holding fast that which is good, we are not bound to accept impossible and inhuman commands as emanating from God Himself, simply because a Hebrew prophet chose to ascribe them to Him, any more than we are compelled to receive the *ipse dixit* of any spirit. The source of both ancient prophecy and modern spirit revelations we claim to be the same. A "Thus saith the Lord!" prefaced to any communication from the spiritual world, whether in ancient or modern days, does not guarantee its divine origin. Many such utterances were dishonouring alike to God and man. The prophets and seers of the Jewish race frequently mistook a spirit—oftentimes an evil one—to be God Himself; and spirits being human, their utterances are necessarily oftentimes fallible and unworthy of credence.

#### THE SOURCE OF BIBLE INSPIRATION.

A critical examination of the claims made by the various Bible writers, as to the nature of the influence under which they wrote, does not sustain the popular idea of direct and verbal inspiration. It may fairly be contended, that when a Hebrew prophet prefaced his prophecy or utterances by "Thus saith the Lord!" it is clear that he intended to ascribe it to a spiritual influence, but it is not by any means clear that he intended to ascribe it to the Almighty Himself, nor if he did so intend, that he was justified in his assertion; and, when he announced that he was moved by the spirit, nothing is more absolutely certain that he did not mean the Third Person in the Trinity, inasmuch as that doctrine was unknown to the Jews.

Whatever was beyond the explanation of the culture of an Israelite seems to have been generally ascribed to God; and thus the message of an angel, the words of a wise man, or the remarkable deliverance of a nation, family, or individual, were so referred to the Almighty, though in every case where the details are given we find them presented through the instrumentality of an angel or angels. It can be definitely shown that the words "Lord" and "God" were used interchangeably for Angel and Spirit. Many passages in the Old Testament clearly refer to angels, notwithstanding that they are distinctly called by the name of the Deity. The designation of God was doubtless given because of the intimate relation between the Divine Being and the messenger as the agent of His purposes. In one passage we have a plain illustration of calling an angel the Lord: "Behold, I will send an angel before thee. Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not, for he will pardon thy transgressions, for My name is on him." This can mean nothing, except it means that the angel of God bore His

name, and was deputed to act for Him. We can thus easily understand that "the Lord" that went before Israel, and was seen in the bush by Moses, and that Moses talked face to face with on Mount Sinai, was the angel sent from the presence of Jehovah, and not Jehovah himself. Indeed, this is corroborated by the martyr Stephen, in his apology before the Council of the Jewish Sanhedrim. He says: "This Moses, whom they refused, saying, 'Who made thee a ruler and a judge?' the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush," And again: "This is he that was in the Church in the Wilderness, with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai." Yet another of the innumerable instances which are scattered up and down the Scriptures: Jacob, it is affirmed, saw God face to face; in fact, wrestled with Him. Yet in Hosea xii. 4, we read in reference thereto—"Yea, he [Jacob] had power over the angel, and prevailed." This rendering is supported by the fact, that just previous to meeting the "Lord," or rather His angel, we read: "And he went on his way, and the angels of God met him; and when Jacob saw them, he said—'This is God's host.'"

From this we learn that spirits or angels—I shall show that both are identical—were the inspirers of the prophets of old. To-day the gifts of the Spirit, bestowed on our own sons and daughters, are absolutely identical with the gifts of the prophets, priests, and seers of the Mosaic dispensation. If it was the privilege of the Patriarchs to entertain angels unawares, and the prerogative of the Prophets to hear the voice and deliver the messages of the Spirit-world, our eyes and our ears are also opened in these latter days; and we do but see what they saw, and hear what they heard, though the messages vouched to us happen to be in accordance with our present stage of development and our modern habits of thought. This part of our subject will be more fully dealt with when we consider the identity of the facts and methods of ancient and modern revelation.

#### ANGELS ARE HUMAN SPIRITS.

It is sometimes argued that the angels of the Bible were not human spirits, but a distinct race of sentient beings, and that, therefore, our deductions as to the identity of the inspirers of the two revelations are consequently fallacious.

There is, however, much more testimony identifying angels as human spirits than the reverse. The simple truth upon the subject is probably this—

(1.) What the Greeks called *Πνεύμα* and *Δαίμων*, the Latins *Spiritus*, and the Hebrew *Angel*, we call *Spirit*. (2.) Therefore, according to Scriptural usage, we may say that the spirit in man is the angel in man, the spirit freed from flesh is the angel in God. (3.) Undeveloped man, i.e., man in whom the principle of virtue had not been opened, or had been perverted or misdirected by passion or misfortune, was called a devil or bad angel in the same Scriptural usage.

The question that will arise here is, How do we know that "Angel" signified a man who had cast off the flesh—what we call Spirit? Thus, the angels that appeared to Abraham and Lot were addressed, and re-

sponded to the address as men; the angel that appeared to Manoah's wife, and afterwards to Manoah, was addressed as man and angel, and answered to both names; the angels that appeared to, and conversed with, Jesus on the Mount, are said to have been Moses and Elias—both men known in the history of the Jews as amongst the most remarkable of their ancestry. The angel that appeared to Cornelius is described by him as a man in white raiment, by Peter as an angel. And, as if for ever to settle any question that could arise on this subject, in the close of that most wonderful book of angelology, the Book of Revelation, the angel who communicated its wondrous visions declares of himself—"I am of thy brethren, the prophets." These facts place our definition beyond the reach of all candid denial. Man, Angel, God is the ascending scale of being everywhere portrayed in the Bible. Man, a spirit in the human form, or in the flesh; Angel, a human spirit out of the flesh, or beyond the experience of earth; God, the universal, embracing both and all conditions. Man, Angel, God, revealing the affinity between, or in all the forms of intelligent life. Like seeking and finding its own. All that makes the man is the angel in form—one and the same—from God to God.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE IDENTITY OF BIBLE FACTS AND SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA.

SPIRITUAL phenomena—or what are called the miracles—have been regarded as the foundation, order, and development of the Christian religion, and their recognition as valid testimonies to its divine character has been all but universal. Whether the pretensions and claims of any faith to absolute credence simply upon the ground of its promulgation having been attended by supermundane phenomena, can be supported by logical argument or not, it is not now my intention to inquire. My present purpose is simply to draw attention to the

### IDENTITY OF THE CHRISTIAN MIRACLES AND THE SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA

of modern days—in fact, to show that the credentials which accompany the renewal of revelation are exactly similar to those produced by the apostles of Christianity in its early days in support of the claims of that faith upon the attention of the world.

In the Old and New Testaments can be traced indications without number of amazing facts, similar to other experiences, witnessed and authenticated in the literature of all ages and nations, our own included. We read of spiritual appearances, spirit-hands, spirit-lights, of spirit-writing, and the levitation of persons and objects, apparently under conditions opposed to the known laws of gravitation. In the New Testament these occurrences are specially pronounced, their *rationale* better understood, and their relationship to our common humanity more clearly defined.

I would point out that the Sacred Book so literally bristles with these records of the intercommunion of the two worlds, that not a



page can be found on which some one instance of these manifestations does not appear or at least referred to. The earnest inquirer need not search long before he is overwhelmed with evidence bearing thereon.

The majority of Christians, while avowing a firm belief in the real nature of these facts, as recorded in the Scriptures, also claim that the powers by which they were produced were special dispensations from God, which, after a while, were withdrawn from the midst of the Christian Church. This assumption, like many others now cherished by Christendom, rests upon no authority, is accompanied by not even the shadow of a proof.

Spiritualists, on the other hand, contend that all things are and have been occurring in accordance with fixed and inexorable laws, and that these manifestations are no exception to the general rule. To-day we see the same laws in operation, the same powers in our midst, governed by the same conditions, identical in power and degree.

Our evidence is of the very best kind—that of actual personal experience. That the facts are identical we are as sure as the strongest analogy can make us. Unless our opponents are prepared to swear that black is white, and that a similarity of kinds, causes, and effects are not sufficient evidences of the identity of well attested experiences, they will not be able to escape from the logical conclusions based upon this testimony.

Let the Bible narratives be read in conjunction with modern spiritual manifestations, and after making due allowance for exaggeration and misconception, arising from the difference of imagery in the Orient and the Occident, beneath all, in both records, can be seen evidences of a life beyond the body—a recognition of a spiritual universe and human immortality.

The following is taken from an excellent little pamphlet by Miss Theobald, entitled “Spiritualism in the Bible Compared with Modern Spiritualism :”—\*

I will hastily draw attention to a few of the instances of different kinds of mediumship recorded in the Old Testament, and then pass on to the New, containing, as the Christian world professes to believe, the teachings of the “New Dispensation,” and under the order of which we are supposed to be now living.

If we turn to Deut. xviii., and read from the 15th verse, we find (as a context to the denunciation in 9th verse, &c.) a promise of a prophet, or medium, and the distinction is clearly made between the abuse and the use of these powers of mediumship, given by God. (20th verse) “The prophet which shall presume to speak in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.”

Read also Elijah’s interview with the prophets of Baal, in 1 Kings xviii. Especially note verses 18, 21, 26. Also read Jer. xxiii.

Let all who believe in the truth of the prophecies recorded in the Bible recognise in the *Signs of the Times* the fulfilment of Joel’s words

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\* London: W. H. Harrison, 33 British Museum Street, W.C. Price 2d.

(ii 28): "And it shall come to pass I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions."

Throughout the Bible it is taught that the withdrawal of these gifts was looked upon as a "mournful sign," a sign of God's displeasure.

In 1 Sam. iii. 1, is written, "There was no open vision in these days," and the development of "clair-audient" mediumship in the child Samuel was hailed with delight by Eli, the Holy Priest of the Temple. In Ezekiel xiii. 23, it is said: "Therefore ye shall see no more vanity, nor divine [as distinct from diabolical] divinations, for I will deliver my people out of your hand." Note, also, third verse, and Ezekiel xii. 23, 24. In Micah iii. 6, we read—"Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision. And it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine."

See Amos viii. 11: "Behold the days shall come, saith the Lord, that I will send a famine in the land. Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord."

In Psalm lxxiv. 9, is the lament, "We see not our signs, there is no more any prophet." See 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, and in Proverbs xxix. 18, Solomon writes, "Where there is no vision the people perish."

#### WRITING AND DRAWING MEDIUMSHIP.

Of all the different varieties of mediumship or "gifts" now being poured so abundantly upon thousands, perhaps the most common are those of writing and drawing. Those who possess these powers find that on holding a pencil passively in their hands, upon paper, it is moved to write messages upon all kinds of subjects, or to draw different things. If we turn to 1 Chron. xxviii. 12, we find this mediumship, as given to David, thus spoken of:—"David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch," &c. . . . "and the pattern of all that he had by the spirit." Again, in 19th verse: "All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me."

Elijah, four years after he had passed away, writes to Jehoram, 2 Chron. xxi. 12: "And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet." It is not specified as to whether this came through a writing medium, or by the

#### DIRECT SPIRIT WRITING,

instances of which are continually being given now at spirit séances, when both writings and drawings are done, under strict test conditions, without mortal contact, and entirely similar to such cases as spoken of by Moses, to whom the Commandments were on two separate occasions "engraven on stone" by direct spirit power. See Exodus xxxi. 18: "And He gave unto Moses, . . . two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." Also, Exodus xxxiv. 1 and 28 verses. And at Belshazzar's feast the writing on the wall was also accompanied by the "finger of a man's hand" (Dan. v. 5).

Perhaps the most marvellous development of spirit power at the present time is that of so-called

# MATERIALISATION.

By this power, at séances held daily, not only in London, but in all parts of the world, spirits show themselves in as tangible a form as that of any of the people who are present. At times only a hand will appear, or a face, but constantly the full form of a spirit (clothed in different costumes, also materialised for the time) can come out from the cabinet, talk freely, and eat visibly with those in the flesh, and then gradually fade away before them.

There are, however, identical instances given in the Bible. See Gen. xviii. how Abraham entertained three angels; in second verse: "And, lo, three men stood beside him:" and having prepared food for them, in the 8th verse it says: "And he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat." Gen. xxxii. 24: "Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day;" and in the 30th verse is added: "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face."

The book of Ezekiel is inexplicable, except when it is read in the light that Spiritualism throws upon it. It is a marvellous record of medial experiences. In Ezekiel ii. 9 we find a materialised spirit hand holds out "a roll of a book" . . . "written within and without" by direct spirit power.

# LEVITATION OF THE HUMAN BODY.

In chap. iii. 12-14 we find Ezekiel is "lifted up," by spirit power, in the same way as many mediums are now elevated, or carried from place to place.

In Ezekiel xi. 1 again is written: "The spirit lifted me up, and brought me into the east gate of the Lord's house." See also chap. viii. 3.

In the "Dialectical Report on Spiritualism," among many witnesses may be found the names of Lord Adare, the Master of Lindsay, and Mr. S. C. Hall, who testify to the truth of the fact that Mr. Home, by medial power, has sometimes not only resisted the natural action of fire himself, but has helped others to do so also. At page 119 we read: "I have seen Lord Adare hold in the palm of his hand a burning live coal, which Mr. Home had placed there, so hot that the mere momentary contact with my hand caused a burn." Mr. S. C. Hall has had red-hot coal placed in the same way upon his head, without even singeing or soiling the silvery hair. This

# POWER TO RESIST THE ACTION OF FIRE

corroborates the truth of the statement given in Daniel iii. 21 and 27. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego "were bound in their coats, their hats, their hosen, and other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace." . . . "And the princes, governors, captains, king's counsellors . . . saw these men, upon whose body the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed upon them." Compare this with Heb. xi. 34.

## SPIRIT LIGHTS.

The appearance of spirit lights, such as we have continually at spirit séances now, is frequently spoken of in the Bible.

At Mr. Williams's séances, John King, the spirit who shows himself, and converses with the circle, brings a lamp, by the light of which he shows himself and lights up the room. Refer to Gen. xv. 17. Abram asks for a sign, which is given him: "And it came to pass, that when the sun went down (*i.e.*, to ensure the necessary condition of darkness) and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between those pieces."

In Exodus iii. 2, "The Angel appeared" unto Moses "in a flame of fire" . . . "out of the midst of a bush," . . . "and the bush was not consumed."

The Israelites are guided in the wilderness by "a pillar of fire" (Ex. xiii. 21).

## HEALING MEDIUMSHIP.

The gift of healing, expressly given by Christ to his followers, and which is now possessed by many mediums (such as M. Jacob, of Paris, and Dr. Mack), was possessed by some of the early prophets. See two cases of healing by Elisha, 2 Kings iv. 32-35; 2 Kings v. 14. Also a similar case is given in 1 Kings xiii. 6.

## TRANCES, VISIONS, AND DIRECT SPIRIT VOICES.

The instances given of trances, visions, and direct spirit voices are innumerable, from the beginning to the end of the Scriptural records. We will only direct attention especially to the descriptions of the trance condition, as given by Samuel to Saul.

"The Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, thou shalt prophecy with them, and shalt be turned into another man" (1 Sam. x. 6). By Ezekiel ii. 2, "And the Spirit entered into me. When he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me." And again by Daniel (x. 8, 9), when he saw a vision he says, "And I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face towards the ground. And behold a hand touched me, which set me upon my knees, and upon the palms of my hands." &c.

These descriptions correspond entirely with the trance conditions of the present day.

## THE NEW DISPENSATION.

Under the order of this dispensation we are now living. To pass on to the New Testament, we find in Christ's life an uninterrupted record of Spiritualistic manifestations.

Angels, or spirits, appeared, and by the direct spirit-voice announced to the Virgin Mary the approaching birth of Christ. Luke i. 28, and following verses. See also in Luke ii., from the 9th verse, how an angel came and spake to the shepherds. In verse 13 we read, "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God."



At Christ's baptism (Matt. iii. 17) a direct voice from heaven came, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

In Matt. iv. 11, we read how Christ, after having been "tempted of the devil," had "angels come to minister to Him."

If Christ, the impersonation of the Deity, required and received such aid during His life on earth, we may be very sure that similar help will not be withheld from any of His followers.

In the "transfiguration," the spirits of Moses and Elias came and "talked with Jesus" (Mark ix. 4; see Luke xxii. 43). In the account of "Christ's agony in the garden," "There appeared an angel unto Him, from heaven, strengthening Him." Note also Matt. xxvi. 53. At the "crucifixion," "The bodies of the saints which slept arose . . . and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."—Matt. xxvii. 52.

A remarkable instance of the power spirits have over material or physical objects is given in Matt. xxviii. 2, and Luke xxiv. 2, where we find that "an angel of the Lord rolled back the stone from the door of Christ's sepulchre." This power is not lost, or even withheld in the present day, as all who have the slightest knowledge of Spiritualism well know how heavy pieces of furniture are continually moved about by an unseen intelligence.

The knowledge we now possess of the power of spirits to materialise bodies (of which mention has been made), explains all the mystery that has hitherto hung over the subject of the resurrection, as to whether Christ appeared in His earthly body, or no. The descriptions given by the disciples of His appearance to them prove beyond a doubt that it was His *spirit*, clothed with a temporarily materialised body; and for the purpose of recognition, when the unbelieving Thomas demanded *tests* of identity, He would even show him the "prints of the nails" in His hands, and the wound in the side (John xx. 25).

In proof of this belief we find that Christ appeared "suddenly" "in different forms," and that He would "vanish out of their sight" after having talked and eaten with His disciples (Mark xvi. 9). He showed Himself first to "Mary Magdalene." In the 12th verse of the same chapter we read, "After that He appeared, in another form, unto two of them." This verse refers to the walk to Emmaus, a full account of which we find in Luke xxiv. 15, and following verses: "While they communed together, . . . Jesus Himself drew near. But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him." Having walked, talked, and eaten with them, we read in 31st verse: "Their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight."

From the 36th verse, in same chapter, we find as the eleven disciples were assembled, "Jesus Himself stood in their midst," and having again eaten and conversed with them, "He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. . . . While He blessed them He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

Both before and after the resurrection we read that Christ bestowed upon His disciples different "spiritual gifts."

Had not these gifts been looked upon by Him as 'needful for the

highest good of His followers, we may be sure He would not have given them. His words, "These signs shall follow those who believe" (Mark xvi. 17), show that they were intended for beneficent uses. And also that these uses were *not* to be restricted to the circumstances attendant upon the first planting of Christianity only, we may know from Christ's words in John xiv. 12: "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to the Father."

It is also evident that the disciples believed and taught that these "signs" or "gifts" were "for all future ages;" for in Acts ii. 29, Peter says: "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off."

The book of "The Acts of the Apostles" is full of accounts of spiritual manifestations, entirely similar to events that are of ordinary occurrence (especially with Spiritualists) in the present day. The second chapter contains an account of the first séance held by the disciples after Christ's ascension. "They were all with one accord in one place. . . . Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. . . . And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire. . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. . . . The multitude came together, and were confounded, because every man heard them speak in his own language."

The sound "as of a rushing mighty wind" is now frequently heard during Spiritualistic séances, and is known to indicate the presence of strong spirit-power. The spirit-lights "like cloven tongues as of fire" also come; sometimes in that very shape, as well as in many other forms.

"The gift of tongues," by which "every man heard his own language," corresponds to the mediumship now in our midst, whereby spirits cause the medium to converse or write in language foreign to his own, and of which he is entirely ignorant.

It is not unusual for the spirit-power to be so strong as to cause every article of furniture in the room, and even the room itself, to vibrate and shake, as if an earthquake were approaching. In Acts iv. 31, we find reference to an exactly similar experience: "And when they had prayed the place was shaken."

Paul, when released from prison, relates how "suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed." An earthquake might have caused the doors to open, but it certainly would not have "loosened the bands" of the prisoners (Acts xvi. 26). Again, when Peter was in prison, "the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison. And he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up. . . . And his chains fell off from his hands." And the angel (or spirit) said: "Gird thyself, bind on thy sandals. . . . Cast thy garments about thee, and follow me. . . . When they were past the first and second ward, they came unto the iron gate, . . . which opened to them of its own accord, and they went out and passed on through one street, and forthwith the angel departed from him."

These "ministering spirits" are now, as ever, "sent forth to minister." In the biography of the "Brothers Davenport," by Dr. Nichols, we find a corresponding experience, which may be quoted. The declaration here given "was made in the most solemn form possible, and under the sanction of an oath taken before two magistrates:"—

"Be it known to all people, that in the seventh month, A.D. 1859, we, the undersigned, were imprisoned in the common jail in the city of Oswego, N.Y., on account of propagating our religious principles; and that after twenty-nine days of our confinement, at evening, when we were all in our prison-room together, as we had just been locked in by the jailor, we having truly answered to his call, a (spirit) voice spoke and said: 'Rand, you are to go out of this place this night. Put on your coat and hat, be ready.' Immediately the door was thrown open, and the voice again spoke and said: 'Now walk quickly out, and on to the attic window yonder, and let thyself down by a rope, and flee from this place. We will take care of the boys. There are many angels present, though but one speaks.'

"That this did absolutely occur in our presence, we do most solemnly and positively affirm, before God, and angels, and men.

"Subscribed and sworn before me, this first day of August, 1859.

(Signed)

"JAMES BARNES, Justice of the Peace.

"IRA ERASTUS DAVENPORT.

"LUKE P. RAND."

In Acts viii. it is narrated how Philip, by the direct spirit-voice, was told to meet the "man of Ethiopia," and how, having fulfilled the mission upon which he found he was sent (*i.e.*, to explain the Scriptures and teach him of Christ), "the Spirit of the Lord caught him away, that the Eunuch saw him no more. . . . But Philip was found at Azotus." Mrs. Guppy, Mr. Herne, Dr. Monck, and other mediums now living have been thus carried from place to place.

In truth, as we find the Scriptures verified in the marvellous events of the present day, we can but recall the words of Solomon in Eccles. i. 9: "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be, and that which is done, is that which shall be done." Again, in Eccles. iii. 14: "Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever."

But in the apostles' time, as now, there was blind unbelief! Agrippa, like multitudes of the present day, refused to accept the truth of Spiritualism. Paul, when taken before him, thus addressed him: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?" (Acts xxvi. 8); and then relates his own mediumistic experiences.

Throughout the Epistles we find reference to "spiritual gifts," and warnings against "evil spirits." Paul, in Rom. i. 11, writes: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end that ye may be established."

See also 1 Cor. xii. 1: "Now concerning spiritual gifts, I would not have you ignorant." And, in verse 31, he desires his followers to "covet earnestly the best gifts." Paul writes, in 1 Cor. xiv. 12:

"Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." The true translation of this passage would read: "zealous or zealots of *spirits*."

In Heb. xii. 1, he encourages Christians to be "constant in faith, patience, and godliness," because of "so great a cloud of witnesses," these "witnesses" being the spirits of their forefathers, spoken of in the preceding chapter.

John, in his first Epistle (iv.), says: "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

The reference given to 1 Cor. xiv. 32, proves the "spirits" here spoken of were those in the spirit-land, and not, as is frequently argued by disbelievers in Spiritualism, the spirits of living persons! for it says: "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."

In Eph. vi. 12, Paul warns his followers against evil spirits: "For we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against the rulers of the darkness of the world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

The argument is often used that we have no proof that the spirits spoken of in the Bible are the spirits of those who have lived on earth. Also, that "angels" are not "spirits," &c. The terms "spirits," "angels," and "messengers" are synonymous.

We know that "Samuel" appeared to Saul. He came as a true, and not as a false prophet. We have, therefore, no reason to suppose this appearance was against God's desire.

Moses and Elias came and talked with Christ and two of His disciples at the transfiguration.

In Rev. xxii. 6, we read: "The Lord of the Holy Prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done." 16th verse: "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." But when John was about to "fall down and worship the angel," he said to John, "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets" (8, 9 verses).

These few proofs, which might, did space permit, be greatly extended, will be sufficient to show that so-called "Modern Spiritualism" is but a fresh, full influx of the same spirit-power that has, happily, through all ages, kept the "gates ajar" between this world and the spirit-world around us.

Just now, when materialism and infidelity are strong in our midst—whilst many, even of our earnest-thinking Christian men, are beginning to doubt the so-called "miracles" of the Bible—the needed help is given. Facts identical with these miracles are of daily occurrence. The reverent investigator into Spiritualism will find that in its light much that was obscure and mysterious is explained and illuminated. Nothing can support the Bible so thoroughly as a belief in Spiritualism—nothing else makes it so clear.

Truly may we still rejoice in the "cloud of witnesses" around us, and the hourly proofs we have of the truth of the words: "To which of the angels said He, at any time, Sit on My right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"



Alas for the glaring inconsistency of Christendom ! The dead and gone witnesses of the past are relieved, but those of the living present are either characterised as fools or as dupes. Considering the belief of the Christian Church in ancient miracles, the denial of modern ones does not leave much ground for modesty upon her part. She assumes that the best mode of proving the existence and reality of the Bible facts is to deny the existence and possibility of all others.

We admit there is a difference between ancient and modern Spiritualism—one of degree. The comparison, however, tells inordinately in favour of the latter. Our present experience is more complete, richer, and universal. If Lot grasped the hand of a spirit, if Jacob wrestled with one, and, to come to later days, if Peter, James, and John saw and talked with Moses and Elias, modern experience is as wide—nay, wider. Thousands, in place of two or three, can tell of having grasped angel-hands, and of having seen and talked face to face with the dead. Sychar did not witness the last test-psychometric reading, and the water-wine of Cana has not ceased to flow. The healing of the sick by the laying on of hands did not expire among the Galilean hills ; the raising of the cataleptic to a state of activity and life need not be regarded as confined to Zarapeth and the gate of Nain. The call to duty by spirit-voice is heard now, as when of old Samuel was called by the voice of the Lord ; and the wisdom of the past is still transmitted through the utterances of the uneducated and ignorant, rivalling the rabbi-confounding utterances of the child Jesus at the Temple gate.

In short, we can claim this identification with no small show of reason and logical argument. Our testimony is so powerful that Christendom cannot refuse to receive it unless prepared to reject all human testimony upon this question. Mr Lewis forcibly clenches this argument in his "Evidences of Spiritualism." He points to the absolute credence given to the Bible miracles, the statements being received in spite of all antecedent improbability, and that in all consistency there is not the slightest ground that the same credence should not be given to those of later days, which are probable in themselves, and particularly probable at the time when they are first alleged to have occurred. There is no creed which rests upon such strong evidence : they have occurred in an enlightened age, and in the great centres of civilised life ; they have been submitted to scientific tests and have never yet been disproved ; and as for the numerous objections which have been made against them, we must consider, in all fairness, whether they have not a wider application in being equally valid in opposition to all creeds, or whether they do not arise under such circumstances as not to discredit the phenomena.

#### ARE SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS TRIVIAL ?

It is sometimes claimed that spiritual manifestations are unlike the miracles of the Old and New Testaments, because of the triviality and seeming absurdity of some of them. Doubtless such objectors repudiate all that is trivial or puerile in the sacred writings. If they are so consistent as to do this, I am afraid their position is not regarded as quite orthodox by their fellow-Christians, and doubtless they are in the same

boat as ourselves. It will not avail to urge that the Scriptures should be judged by a different standard to other books. This I will by no means allow. Questions like these depend upon principles of the broadest and firmest character, the bearings of which can be fairly apprehended by all who come honestly and openly to the inquiry. Depend upon it the enunciation of truth has not been committed to language full of niceties of expression and difficult to comprehend, but in words that all men may understand and none be mistaken.

But, "to the law and the testimony." Here God is ever represented as using humble means, choosing the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak to confound the mighty. Jesus of Nazareth—Himself a striking illustration of majesty and humility combined—did not disdain to use humble means for the end He had in view ; as, for instance, when restoring the sight of the blind man, He simply spat on the ground and anointed the eyes of the patient with the mud thus obtained.

The case of Naaman, too, forcibly illustrates this lesson. Being told to wash in the Jordan seemed to him such a trifling thing to do after his long journey. It was, however, the condition of cure—none other would do so well,—but it was strikingly effective in its results.

We do not doubt the trivial character of some modern manifestations has a purpose. There are some weaklings who could not be reached otherwise—doubting Thomases or test-seeking Gideons who must receive proof upon proof before conviction takes firm hold of their minds. In their cases the proof was granted, the test given : so it is now. The manifestations are graduated in order to satisfy all classes of minds. Behind the apparent absurdities lie grand spiritual truths, and as channels for these manifestations these despised facts are invaluable. Each one that is well attested, however absurd, is a palpable demonstration of the life that lies beyond the body—a demonstration longed and waited for by millions of our race, and which, if vouchsafed, would have been hailed with delight. Let them not be despised. After all, the question is not altogether one concerning their quality and uses, but of their reality. This point settled and all others will doubtless be solved in good time.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### POPULAR ERRORS AND OBJECTIONS TO SPIRITUALISM EXPLAINED AND ANSWERED.

THE same objections to, and popular errors regarding, Spiritualism are constantly cropping up, and requiring an answer, or explanation, and it may not be altogether out of place in a work like this to present some "milk for babes" with the strong meat for the grown up children. These latter can always take care of themselves, whilst the "weaklings in the faith" require constant extraneous support until they are able to run alone. For instance, the investigator is constantly assailed by objections resulting in a great measure from an imperfect knowledge of the subject, and I propose to obviate the difficulties in which he is placed by presenting, in as concise a form as possible, the current

objections and popular errors of the day regarding Spiritualism, and the replies or explanations which have been made to them by the best writers in the ranks of Spiritualism. The stock of objections is necessarily limited, and they have been so often preferred and so often answered, that nothing very new can really be urged in reply; but it may be useful to give, as it were, a sort of *precis* of the best thought evolved thereby. Having thus briefly introduced my plan, I will at once proceed.

I.—*Spiritualism is utterly incredible and impossible, for it contravenes the laws of nature.*

This objection is generally brought forward with a great show of learning by those who know nothing at all about the matter, and who, limiting the circle of truth by the horizon of their own incapacity and ignorance, would fain settle the whole question off-hand. It may be very unkind, but Spiritualists really must decline the proffered shelf. We have a certain class of facts to deal with which are as well attested as any other facts, and *the nature of the facts* themselves cannot be admitted as a valid reason for refusing to receive them *as facts*. Evidence, if it be otherwise trustworthy, cannot be invalidated by the unlikelihood of that which it attests. If the phenomena are incredible to those whose knowledge does not admit them within its precincts, so much the worse for the knowledge. It is simply imperfect, and the wisest thing would be for such persons just to—open their eyes. What reason has any one to assume what is or what is not credible or incredible, more especially when the matter under consideration is not a question of *belief*, but one of absolute fact? The Rev. Adin Ballou, who was one of the earliest of the investigators into Modern Spiritualism, very cogently remarks:—

“Let history teach us modesty and candour. When did an extraordinary genius ever arise amongst men, in any department of life, without encountering the unbelief, prejudice, contempt, and hostility of the world’s wise, influential, and honoured men? When was any wonderful or very important truth discovered and proclaimed without meeting this same kind of opposition? When was any great revelation made from heaven, or any reformation among men attempted without having to pass through this baptism of scepticism, scorn, and reproach? Never since the foundation of the world. Whoever arose or whatever was announced extraordinary to the times and to popular knowledge, has always been met by the brazen outcry or muttered denunciation—pretender! impostor! deceiver! blasphemer! disturber! visionary! fool!—it is incredible, impossible, utterly false and foolish! It is an imposture, a trick, a delusion, a humbug! Away with it! Read of Moses, Jesus, and all the great and good of sacred history. Read of Galileo, Columbus, Harvey, Fulton, and all the now-honoured discoverers on record. Mark how the great, the pious, and the reputed wise of the earth as well as the ignorant multitude, disbelieved, sneered, despised, and resisted. Yet real merit triumphed, and truth prevailed. Many of the learned made themselves supremely ridiculous, but they could not make what they opposed

really contemptible. Who will profit by the beacon-light of their pride, scorn, and folly? Not they who persist in ignoring or sneering at these spirit manifestations as incredible *per se*, as despicable humbug, unworthy even of a decent investigation. There is a *reality* in them—a reality too wonderful and important to pass unheeded or to be thrust aside. I *know* what I say, and whereof I affirm in this matter. Thousands of intelligent and honest minds, as incapable of deceiving or being deceived as any that walk the earth, *know* the same. And the testimony of all these witnesses will stand. . . . The negro chieftain of Central Africa, when told by the traveller that in the North water sometimes became hard like stones, *knew* the tale to be a lie—a humbug; because *he*, most omniscient soul, had never seen ice! Nevertheless, ice was a reality. And so are these manifestations.”

As to the alleged violation or contravention of the laws of nature, this is simply another way of stating that they may be contrary to our present knowledge of the laws of nature: he would be a rash man, however, who would assert that they are contrary to and a violation of *all* laws—indeed, such a statement would be simply absurd. Who can say that he knows all the powers operating in and through nature? The boundaries of nature exist only where our present knowledge places them. The discoveries of to-morrow will alter and enlarge them. Alfred Russell Wallace in his “Scientific Aspect of the Supernatural,” says:—

“One common fallacy appears to me to run through all the arguments against facts deemed miraculous, when it is asserted that they *violate*, or *invade*, or *subvert* the laws of nature. This is really assuming the very point to be decided; for if the disputed fact did happen, it could only be in accordance with the laws of nature, since the only complete definition of the ‘laws of nature’ is, that they are the laws which regulate all phenomena. The very word ‘supernatural,’ as applied to a *fact*, is an absurdity; and ‘miracle,’ if retained at all, requires a more accurate definition than has yet been given of it. To refuse to admit what in other cases would be absolutely conclusive evidence of a fact, because it cannot be explained by those laws of nature with which we are now acquainted, is really to maintain that we have complete knowledge of those laws, and can determine beforehand what is or is not possible. The whole history of the progress of human knowledge shows us that the disputed prodigy of one age becomes the accepted natural phenomenon of the next, and that many apparent miracles have been due to laws of nature subsequently discovered.

“Many phenomena of the simplest kind would appear supernatural to men having limited knowledge. Ice and snow might easily be made to appear so to inhabitants of the tropics. The ascent of a balloon would be supernatural to persons who know nothing of the cause of its upward motion; and we may well conceive that, if no gas lighter than atmospheric air had ever been discovered, and if in the minds of all (philosophers and chemists included) air had become indissolubly connected with the idea of the highest form of terrestrial matter, the testimony of those who had seen a balloon ascend might be discredited,



on the grounds that a law of nature must be suspended in order that anything could freely ascend through the atmosphere in direct contravention to the law of gravitation.

"A century ago, a telegram from three thousand miles' distance, or a photograph taken in a second would not have been believed possible, and would not have been credited on any testimony except by the ignorant and superstitious who believed in miracles. Five centuries ago, the effects produced by the modern telescope and microscope would have been deemed miraculous, and if related only by travellers as existing in China or Japan would certainly have been disbelieved. The power of dipping the hand into melted metals unhurt is a remarkable instance of the effects of natural laws appearing to contravene another natural law; and it is one which certainly might have been, and probably has been, regarded as a miracle, and the fact believed or disbelieved, not according to the amount or quality of the testimony to it, but according to the credulity or supposed superior knowledge of the recipient. About twenty years ago, the fact that surgical operations could be performed on patients in the mesmeric trance without their being conscious of pain, was strenuously denied by most scientific and medical men in this country, and the patients, and sometimes the operators, denounced as impostors; the asserted phenomenon was believed to be contrary to the laws of nature. Now, probably every man of intelligence believes the facts, and it is seen there must be some as yet unknown law of which they are a consequence. When Castellet informed Reamur that he had reared perfect silkworms from the eggs laid by a virgin moth, the answer was, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, and the fact was disbelieved. It was contrary to one of the widest and best established laws of nature; yet it is now universally admitted to be true, and the supposed law ceases to be universal. These few illustrations will enable us to understand how some reported miracles may have been due to yet unknown laws of nature. We know so little of what nerve or life-force really is, how it acts or can act, and in what degree it is capable of transmission from one human being to another, that it would be indeed rash to affirm that under no exceptional conditions could phenomena, such as the apparently miraculous cure of many diseases, or perception through other channels than the ordinary senses, ever take place."

This objection sometimes takes another form, in this wise. It is asserted that it requires immense scientific knowledge to decide on the reality of any uncommon or incredible facts, and that until scientific men investigate and prove them, they are not worthy of credit. Mr. Wallace, whom we have just quoted, and who is himself a "scientific man," simply gives this statement a plain denial. He says:—

"Now I venture to say that a greater fallacy than this was never put forth. The subject is very important, and the error is very common, but the fact is the exact opposite of what is stated; for I assert, without fear of contradiction, that whenever the scientific men of any age have denied the facts of investigation on *a priori* grounds, they have always been wrong.

"It is not necessary to do more than refer to the well-known names

of Galileo, Harvey, and Jenner. The great discoveries they made were, as we know, violently opposed by all their scientific contemporaries, to whom they appeared absurd and incredible; but we have equally striking examples much nearer to our own day. When Benjamin Franklin brought the subject of lightning conductors before the Royal Society, he was laughed at as a dreamer, and his paper was not admitted to the *Philosophical Transactions*. When Young put forth his wonderful proofs of the undulatory theory of light, he was equally hooted at as absurd by the popular scientific writers of the day.\* The *Edinburgh Review* called upon the public to put Thomas Gray into a strait jacket for maintaining the practicability of railroads. Sir Humphrey Davy laughed at the idea of London ever being lighted with gas. When Stephenson proposed to use locomotives on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, learned men gave evidence that it was impossible that they could go even twelve miles an hour. Another great scientific authority declared it to be equally impossible for ocean steamers to cross the Atlantic. The French Academy of Sciences ridiculed the great astronomer (Arago) when he wanted even to discuss the subject of the electric telegraph. Medical men ridiculed the stethoscope when it was first discovered.

"How are the modern observers of some phenomena usually termed supernatural and incredible, less worthy of attention than those already quoted? Let us take, first, the reality of what is called clairvoyance. The men who have observed this phenomenon, who have carefully tested it through long years, or through their whole lives, will rank in scientific knowledge and in intellectual ability as quite equal to the observers in any other branch of discovery. We have no less than seven competent medical men—Drs Elliotson, Gregory, Ashburner, Lee, Herbert Mayo, Esdaile, and Haddock, besides persons of such high ability as Miss Martineau, Mr H. G. Atkinson, Mr Charles Bray, and Baron Reichenbach. With the history of previous discoverers before us, is it more likely that these eleven educated persons, knowing all the arguments against the facts, and investigating them carefully, should be all wrong, and those who say, *a priori*, that the thing is impossible, should be all right, or the contrary? If we are to learn anything by history and experience, then we may safely prognosticate, that in this case, as in so many others, those who disbelieve other men's observations without inquiry will be found to be in the wrong."

## II.—*Spiritualism is a morbid craving for hidden mysteries.*

It is difficult to see in this objection, which is put forward by not a

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\* The following are choice specimens from *Edinburgh Review* articles in 1803 and 1804:—

"Another Bakerian lecture, containing more fancies, more blunders, more unfounded hypotheses, more gratuitous fictions, all upon the same field, and from the sterile yet fruitless brain of the same eternal Dr. Young." And again—

"It teaches no truths, reconciles no contradiction, arranges no anomalous facts, suggests no new experiments, and leads to no new inquiries."

One might almost suppose it to be a modern scientific writer hurling scorn at Spiritualism.

few, the slightest trace of common sense. The plea of trespassing and prying into the mysteries of God has ever been the barrier which priestcraft has put in the way of the extension of knowledge, and I doubt if it has much weight at the present day. Epes Sargent has very cleverly answered a clergyman\* who advanced this objection as a reason against the investigation of Spiritualism.

"An English clergyman of the radical school finds 'much that is repulsive in the so-called revelations of Spiritualism,' and is 'led to hope most earnestly that it may not be true.' He says, 'Spiritualists appeal to a vast portion of mankind who prefer seeing to believing, who are ever hankering after signs and wonders, and whose materialistic notions of God and soul and heaven compel them to seek satisfaction in visible proofs. We come into the field with very different weapons. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. And if we cannot hold our ground with these, we refuse to adopt an inferior mode of warfare, or pander to what seems to us a morbid craving for hidden mysteries.'

"*Hidden mysteries!* So were many of the wonders of science at one time 'hidden mysteries,' and the vulgar often thought that chemists and geologists were seeking after hidden and forbidden mysteries. Is superstition now driven from the hovel to the pulpit?

"But what relevancy is there in this lofty talk of 'carnal weapons' and 'morbid cravings.' The question is simply one of facts, not of processes of belief, nor of esthetic sympathies, nor of theological speculations, nor of warfare of any kind. As well might we accuse Euclid of causality in proving his propositions, as charge it on spiritualists in establishing theirs. And if, as this writer says, spiritualists appeal to those who prefer 'seeing to believing,' what is this but a proof that they are profoundly sincere in their knowledge, and that they are dealing, not with hazy abstractions, but with things that may be tested and verified?

"As to the imputation that they 'pander to what seems a morbid craving for hidden mysteries,' what is this loose phrase but the easy refuge of one too apathetic, too timid, or too pre-occupied to face and investigate these extraordinary phenomena? Is the geologist actuated by a 'morbid craving' when he pries under slabs of sandstone and earthy layers for the evidence of his science? Or shall the marvels that shall have relation to the existence of an immortal soul in man, be accounted as less legitimate and important objects of study than the discovery of the fossil remains of extinct varieties of animals.

Mr. St. George Stock has also well replied to this class of censors. He says, "Another *à priori* objection against Spiritualism rests on our *ideas* of a future state. But if the facts alleged are found to be facts, so much the worse for our *ideas*. Honest old Whately could not bear the phrase, 'I should be sorry to think.' Let truth first be established, and sentiment will soon adapt itself to it."

### III.--*Spiritualism is a survival or revival of the old superstitions.*

Mr. Wallace has very forcibly replied to this objection as follows :—

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\* The Rev. Charles Voysey in a sermon on *Immortality*, preached at St. George's Hall, London.



"The assertion so often made, that Spiritualism is the survival or revival of old superstitions is so utterly unfounded as to be hardly worth notice. A science of human nature which is founded on observed facts; which appeals only to facts and experiment; which takes no belief on trust; which inculcates investigation and self-reliance as the first duties of intelligent beings; which teaches that happiness in a future life can be secured by cultivating and developing to the utmost the higher faculties of our intellectual and moral nature—and by no other method—is and must be the natural enemy of all superstition. Spiritualism is an experimental science, and affords the only sure foundation for a true philosophy and a pure religion. It abolishes the terms 'supernatural' and 'miracle' by an extension of the sphere of law and the realm of nature; and in doing so it takes up and explains whatever is true in the superstitions and so-called miracles of all ages. It and it alone is able to harmonise conflicting creeds; and it must ultimately lead to concord among mankind in the matter of religion, which has for so many ages been the source of unceasing discord and incalculable evil; and it will be able to do this because it appeals to evidence instead of faith, and substitutes facts for opinion; and is thus able to demonstrate the source of much of the teaching that men have so often held to be divine."

IV.—*Spirits have nothing to do with the phenomena in question; they are caused by electricity, magnetism, &c.*

The "spiritual" theory, although the simplest and most rational explanation of the phenomena of Modern Spiritualism, appears to be the very last solution to which our opponents are inclined to give credit. They may be anything or everything—but spiritual in their nature and origin. Of all the unpopular subjects which have, from time to time, come under the notice of mankind, Spiritualism has perhaps been accounted for, and explained in the most absurd and illogical manner—by the cracking of knee or toe joints, by electricity, magnetism, mesmerism, psychic force, imposition, imagination, and nothing at all. But the theory which ascribes them to any source save the interposition of disembodied spirits fails to cover *all* the ground. That this is so we have ample proof in the records of the scientific research of not a few investigators, such as Wallace and Crookes in England, Mages and Hare in America, Flammarion in France, Fichte, Zollner and Scheibner in Germany, and others, many of whom started their investigation in complete antagonism to the spiritualistic theory, but who were in every case driven step by step from explanation to explanation, until at last they confessed that the phenomena could be accounted for in no other way, or attributed to no other source.

With reference to this particular objection, Adin Ballou has written:—

Does the objector mean that electricity, magnetism, or something of the kind *originates* these manifestations, with all their indicated intelligence? Or, only that some imponderable element is used in elaborating them? If the *latter*, his objection amounts to nothing. If the former, does he *know* it to be a fact? Can electricity, magnetism, or



anything of the kind, personate a thinking being, generate rationality, and play the part of a sentimental moral agent? The idea is utterly preposterous. When Morse's or Bain's electric telegraph shall be seen spinning off communications without an originating intelligence higher than their own, it will be time to credit this assumption.

V.—*The phenomena are trivial and commonplace, and therefore unworthy credence.*

Nine-tenths of the people who oppose Spiritualism are those who never take the trouble to investigate anything, but are content to follow as their leaders may direct, the leaders themselves being manifestly unfair in their treatment of whatever is new. Thus the ideas of most people regarding Spiritualism being gathered from newspaper abuse—which is cheap and dirty enough—it is hardly to be wondered at that the popular conception of what constitutes Spiritualism is neither very exalted nor dignified. But as one of our writers has very pithily remarked, spirit-rapping and table-turning no more constitute Spiritualism than an illustration in the *Police News* constitutes art, or a penny whistle constitutes music. They are the mere fringe of the subject, and there are many other higher and more intellectual forms of mediumship. Yet we could ill spare these “vulgar rappings and tippings.”

Even these forms of phenomena have their uses. Speaking of the lower class of physical manifestations, Mr Robert Cooper, in his “Spiritual Experiences,” says:—

“Though such work for spiritual beings may not be in accordance with our preconceived notions, still it is questionable whether a more effectual and suitable method could be devised of combating the hard-headed materialism of the times, and convincing men that there is something in the universe besides matter. A knock on the head with a guitar by unseen agency is, to some minds, a much more effective argument than the logic of a Locke, and it is not for us to call that ‘common and unclean’ which has been the means of convincing thousands of the reality of a spiritual world, and will ultimately shake the citadel of materialism to its foundations. This is not the first time that things foolish in the estimation of the wise have been used to confound their presumed wisdom, and it may be that these derided and despised phenomena will ultimately be the means, in the hands of Providence, of inaugurating an era of progress in the future of humanity, in which shall be realised correcter views of the duties pertaining to this life, and of the nature of that higher life to come.”

The tippings and rappings may be absurd. Granted. But beyond the apparent absurdities lie grand spiritual truths. Each fact that is well attested—however absurd—is a palpable demonstration of the life that lies beyond the body. Robert Dale Owen, remarking on this very point, says:—

“I might reply in a general way, that nothing in all the works of nature around us, how little soever appreciated by man, is trifling in the sight of Him, who

" Sees with equal eye as God of all,  
A hero perish or a sparrow fall;  
Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,  
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

"But aside from this great truth, is there anything very solemn or reverent to the common mind, in the fall, from its parent tree, of an apple? An infant sees it and clasps its tiny hands; an uncultured peasant notes it as evidence that his orchard crop is ripening; but to a Newton it suggests the law which holds planets to their course, and governs half the natural phenomena that occur throughout the world."

Adin Ballou very cleverly "turns the tables" on those who object to Spiritualism, because some of the phenomena are too low and undignified to be ascribed to departed spirits, and who cannot endure the thought that such ridiculous means of manifestation should be adopted. He writes:—

"Few mortals are yet free enough from low undignified conduct themselves, to justify this spiritual fastidiousness. I have been present at many *sittings* for the manifestations, and seen some rather low and queer proceedings on the part of the spectators, especially of sceptics; but never have I seen anything purporting to come from the spirit world quite so uncouth as the grins, quirks, and gibes of their mortal inquisitors. Does the objector assume that men in the flesh, take them as they are, in public and private, have a right to expect manifestations from spirits more refined and dignified than the one in question? If so, he and I differ radically respecting the merits of mortals. I assert that they have no right whatever to complain on that score. Does *he* assume that all departed spirits must, of necessity, be too pure, elevated, and glorious ever to manifest themselves by the methods to which he takes exception? Does he imagine that merely passing through death elevates the human spirit to deification? Some seem to cherish these extravagant notions, not only without proof, but contrary to all reason. Such need the very demonstrations complained of to disabuse them of their groundless imaginations. Let us learn all we can from the manifestations now given us. In due time we shall witness higher ones. All great results must have their *preparations*, however seemingly crude and undignified. Why find fault with nature?"

So also the Rev. Samuel Watson, who remarks:—

"I frankly confess that Spiritualism has its ridiculous and objectionable side, but the same accusation may be brought against almost every mundane institution. The absurdity of many of the manifestations is the necessary consequence of the absurd and unhallowed state of mind of those who attend and officiate at many seances. The great principle that like will seek its like is true in the spiritual as well as in the natural world."

The objection sometimes takes another form and is stated thus:—It is not probable that God would communicate to us a knowledge of a future state through such instruments as tables, &c. Mr Lewis, M.P., in his "Hints for the Evidence of Spiritualism," furnishes the following reply:—

“The force of this objection has been entirely demolished by one whom the orthodox will accept as an authority—Bishop Butler. He has told us in his *Analogy* that we are no judges of what constitutes probability or improbability as applied to the divine mode of working. What may be strongly contrary to our expectation may, for all that, be the process adopted by God; what may seem objectionable, or even ridiculous to us, may not be so in reality. ‘The only question for us, therefore, concerning the truth of Spiritualism is whether these be real manifestations, not whether they be attended by every circumstance which we should have looked for; whether it be what it claims to be, not whether it be such a system and so promulgated as weak men might fancy a method of communicating with the unseen world should be. . . . Since upon experience the course of nature is found greatly different from what before experience would have been expected, and liable, as men fancy, to great objections, this renders it highly credible that they may find the gift of communicating with spirits very different from expectations formed beforehand, and liable in appearance to great objections. It is highly credible beforehand that on the supposition that God should afford men some additional instruction by Spiritualism, it would be with circumstances against the credibility of which we should be apt to fancy we had strong objections.’ This is Bishop Butler’s own reasoning, in which, for *revelation*, we have only substituted *spiritualism*, and we are entitled to make this substitution, because if the argument is good in the one case it must be equally good in the other. If it is to be no bar to our accepting revelation that it contains many things unlikely to happen, and even absurd in our eyes, so likewise the occurrence of the same sort of things in Spiritualism constitutes no objection to our receiving that. We are in both cases, as always happens, driven back upon the evidence, ‘Are these things true?’

“But is there anything absurd in the table-turning, &c.? The absurdity, if there be any, must consist in the idea of spirits being able to influence *material substance*; because in a table, as such, I see nothing more ridiculous than in a house, or a tree, or a sun-dial, or a fleece of wool, or a mountain, or a herd of pigs. Now the Divine Spirit (from which the spirit of man is a direct emanation—Gen. ii. 7) is represented to us as continually acting upon matter, not only by means of those general and orderly laws by which we believe the worlds to have been fashioned and to be still upheld, but under exceptional circumstances, such action being marked by what we must term very trivial details. Thus I should suppose that if spirits were to make an answer to an enquiry by filling a fleece of wool with a basin full of water at one time, and drying it up at another, such a circumstance would be looked upon as very absurd and ridiculous; yet this was precisely the means adopted by God for communicating with Gideon. Spirits, good and bad, are represented in the Bible as constantly influencing material substances. As we have seen, an angel touches Elijah—an angel touches Daniel; again an angel wrestles with Jacob, and injures the joint of his thigh. Evil spirits rend and tear people, and throw them down, and set in motion a herd of swine. . . .

"Is there, again, anything very violent in the supposition—(1) That spirits may be able to communicate with living man; and (2) (which is the point to which I desire to call attention), that they can only do so, *as a general rule, through material substances?* Intercourse between spirits in this world can certainly be conducted in no other way. . . .

"Table-turning, moreover, forms but a single item in these phenomena, and is a process . . . generally practised by novices and less experienced mediums. It is but the rudest and most elementary mode adopted by spirits for making known their presence. There are other phenomena of a much more advanced kind, which can scarcely be termed ridiculous—*e.g.*, 'voices appertaining to no one in the flesh. heard to speak and hold intercourse with men.' . . . And it is to be observed of nearly all these manifestations, that if they are indeed absurd and contemptible in their character, they, or something very like them indeed, are to be found in the inspired record. . . . Thus if any one should feel inclined to laugh at the production of fruit and flowers by spiritual means, I would remind him that this is exactly what was done with Aaron's rod, which brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds (Numbers xvii. 8). If 'spirit-hands' provoke mirth, we must at any rate bear in mind that such things have been seen. 'He put forth *the form of an hand*, and took me by a lock of mine head' (Ezek. viii. 3). 'In the same hour came forth *fingers of a man's hand*, and wrote upon the plaster of the wall: and the king saw *the part of the hand* that wrote' (Dan. v. 5). 'The 'touching' of people's knees, &c., by these hands again may be ludicrous enough, but, as we have seen, a spirit or angel touched Jacob on the thigh, and Elijah and Daniel were similarly touched. Mrs. Guppy is said to have produced, in the midst of a circle, by the aid of spirits, 'three live eels.' I may doubt the fact, but I shall not see in it anything so very mirth-provoking, if I believe that Pharaoh's magicians could rival Moses or Aaron in evoking or producing *frogs*, and sending them into the houses and bedrooms of the Egyptians. 'Spirit-lights or fires moving about a room' are common phenomena. And I find constantly in Scripture the appearance of lights and fires accompanying spiritual manifestations. Thus, in the above cited passage from Ezekiel, 'I beheld, and lo, a likeness as the appearance of fire.' In the Acts 'tongues as of fire' settle on the apostles, &c., &c. . . . It may be said that the scriptural narratives have produced these imitations. Very well! but then what becomes of the charge of their being of a *ludicrous character*, which is what I have been considering?"

Others object not so much to the phenomena themselves as to the communications. The objection may be formulated thus:—

VI.—*The communications are puerile and useless: they are sometimes untrue: they tell us nothing new about the future life.*

Regarding the puerility and uselessness of the communications, Adin Ballou, whom I now quote, says:—

"No intelligent and truly candid man, who has taken care to inform himself on the subject, can endorse this objection without great qualification. The interest taken in these communications, by thousands



of upright and sensible people, testifies to the contrary. Specifications might be made in great abundance to the contrary. But granting the objection were much better founded than it is, would it not bear with equal force against nine-tenths of the sermons, speeches, books, and formal proceedings of mankind? Great principles of truth and duty are all *old*, and in some sort commonplace. Is it therefore of no importance to *reiterate* and *apply* them? There is a God, and a future state of existence. Man ought to love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself. These are very old principles, and generally undisputed, though poorly heeded. Still, they need to be preached, illustrated, and urged. Every generation needs fresh inculcations and demonstrations of them. This seems to be thought quite proper, as respects the usual routine of human means. Hence we have thirty or forty thousand clergymen in this country, and institutional appliances without number. Their communications, stale, commonplace, and lifeless, as they may be deemed by some, are nevertheless sought after, venerated, and sustained at much expense by multitudes. It is probable that the objector is one among these multitudes. Why, then, does he complain that spirit manifestations present nothing new, important, or useful? His objection is exploded by facts, and by its inconsistency with approved usages, even in the most sacred matters."

Hudson Tuttle also very shrewdly remarks:—

"Too often the ignorant accept the vague utterance received from a moving table, answering they know not by what force, or of a medium, as infallible authority, and thenceforth their lives are tinged by its influence. They gain the self-conceit of being specially ordained for missions; they ventilate their insanities from the rostrum; they crowd the press with their drivelling vagaries; they put their conceits into their lives, and become insufferable nuisances.

"Thence flows the flood of 'communications' from the 'great departed' which would disgrace a country school-boy as compositions. Their bad grammar and rude style might be referred to imperfect 'control,' but they have a singular mark of common sense and ideas, and the sceptic particularly inquires if Washington, Webster, Clay, and Parker have become drivelling idiots. If any cause be capable of bringing these worthy individuals to earth, one would think the 'communications' to which their names have been affixed were sufficient. It is not to be supposed for a moment that those worthies dictated such messages. Possibly they may communicate; but, if they do, they assuredly stamp their individuality on their sentences, and not content themselves with the stereotyped trance rigmarole, with here and there an old platitude glittering in comparison with the surrounding verbiage."

Alfred Russell Wallace, referring to Professor Huxley's well-known comparison of the twaddle and "chatter of old women and curates" to the essays often received through mediums, says:—

"Many scientific men deny the spiritual source of the manifestations on the ground that real, genuine spirits might reasonably be expected not to indulge in the commonplace trivialities which do undoubtedly form the staple of ordinary spiritual communications. But surely

Professor Huxley, as a naturalist and a philosopher, would not admit this to be a reasonable expectation. Does he not hold the doctrine that there can be no effect, mental or physical, without an adequate cause; and that mental states, faculties, idiosyncrasies, that are the result of gradual development and life-long, or even ancestral habit, cannot be suddenly changed by any known or imaginable cause? And if (as the Professor would probably admit) a very large majority of those who daily depart this life, are persons addicted to twaddle, persons whose pleasures are sensual rather than intellectual—whence is to come the transforming power which is suddenly, at the mere throwing off the physical body, to change these into beings able to appreciate and delight in high and intellectual pursuits? The thing would be a miracle, the greatest of miracles, and surely Professor Huxley is the last man to contemplate innumerable miracles as part of the order of nature; and all for what? Merely *to save these people from the necessary consequences of their misspent lives*. For the essential teaching of Spiritualism is, that we are, all of us, in every act and thought, helping to build up a 'mental fabric,' which will be, and constitute ourselves, more completely after the death of the body, than it does now. Just as the fabric is well or ill built, so will our happiness and progress be aided or retarded. . . . Although, therefore, the twaddle and triviality of so many of the communications is not one whit more interesting to sensible Spiritualists than it is to Professor Huxley, and is never voluntarily listened to, yet the fact that such poor stuff is talked (supposing it to come from spirits) is both a fact that might have been anticipated and a lesson of deep import. We must remember, too, the character of the séances at which these commonplace communications are received. A miscellaneous assemblage of believers of various grades and tastes, but mostly in search of an evening's amusement, and of sceptics who look upon all the others as either fools or knaves, is not likely to attract to itself the more elevated and refined denizens of the higher spheres, who may well be supposed to feel too much interest in their own new and grand intellectual existence to waste their energies on either class. If the fact is proved, that people continue to talk after they are dead with just as little sense as when alive, but that, being in a state in which sense, both common and uncommon, is of far greater importance to happiness than it is here (where fools pass very comfortable lives), they suffer the penalty of having neglected to cultivate their minds; and being so much out of their element in a world where all pleasures are mental, they endeavour to recall old times by gossiping with their former associates whenever they can. Professor Huxley will not fail to see its vast importance as an incentive to that higher education which he is never weary of advocating. He would assuredly be interested in anything having a really practical bearing upon the present as well as on the future condition of men; and it is evident that even these low and despised phenomena of Spiritualism, 'if true,' have this bearing, and combined with its higher teachings, constitute a great moral agency which may yet regenerate the world."

With regard to the second clause (Sec. VI.), viz., that the communi-

cations are sometimes untrue and lying, the ensuing reply by Adin Ballou is clearly to the point :—

“Because some of the communications come from lying spirits, do you feel justified in throwing the *whole* away? Do you act as wisely in all other cases? Religion is professed by thousands of irreconcilable sects; do you therefore reject all religion? Politics and governments are full of deception, contradiction, and confusion; do you therefore repudiate all social organisation, law, and order? Almost every case tried in our courts has false or contradictory witnesses, sophistical counter pleadings, and more or less nonsense; do you therefore come to the conclusion that there is no truth or right in their controversies—that no witnesses and no lawyers are there—that the whole demonstration is a phantasm? Trading, throughout the world, involves an immense amount of deceit and incongruity; do you therefore eschew all trade, and doubt the existence of such beings as traders? There are liars, hypocrites, knaves, and fools in all human societies; do you therefore believe in the non-existence of truth, honesty, and wisdom—in the non-existence of human society—in the non-existence of mankind? In your circle of friends, however loving and beloved, there is more or less of falsehood, discord, contradiction, and puerility, to disappoint, disgust, and shake your confidence; do you therefore throw away all friends and friendship, and disbelieve in their actual existence? There are few human beings, decently conversant with themselves, who do not find that they are *streaked* with self-contradiction—that they are at some times what they despise at others—that they are bundles of incongruity, weakness, and folly; would you therefore throw away and resolve yourself into a nonentity? Why not? ‘Consistency is a jewel.’ You have no faith in the reality of these spirit manifestations, because there is so much lying, contradiction, &c., about them. How much is there of all this about them after all? Any more than you find elsewhere in men and things throughout nature? No. Just tell me *who* or *what* in the universe you can implicitly accept and confide in, without question, without discrimination, and without making some allowance for *tare*? Let the objector think a few seconds, sober thoughts on this part of the subject, and he will cast his objection to the winds. Then he will take his winnowing-sieve into this investigation, resolved to ‘prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.’ And then he will see that these same lies, contradictions, incongruities, and puerilities, by which he has been so repelled, are precisely the incidentals to have been expected, in the crude stage of spirit manifestations, made, as they necessarily are, through *imperfect media*, and sometimes by spirits of the *lower circles*. Who had a right to look only for perfect and unquestionable demonstrations, in such a stage of the thing, and under such circumstances? Pray let us use a little reason and consideration in this as well as other subjects.”

I will close my replies to this clause of the objection by indicating the lesson to be learnt from these contradictory and lying communications. It seems to me that it is one of the providential designs of these manifestations to teach mankind that spirits, in general, maintain the characters they formed to themselves during their earthly life; that

indeed they are the identical persons they were while dwelling in the flesh—hence, that while there are just, truthful, wise, and Christian spirits, there are also spirits addicted to lying, profanity, obscenity, mischief, and violence ; and spirits who deny God and religion just as they did while they were in this world. Conclusion: *Death makes no instantaneous change in the moral nature.*

I now have to notice the third clause, viz.—*Spiritualism teaches us nothing new about the future life: we are no wiser than of old.*

Epes Sargent says :—

“The wonderful fact of a future life is, at the present time, either practically ignored, or but faintly entertained, or else ridiculed and rejected by more than three-fourths of the people of Christendom ; an Atheistic Science lifts its voice and proclaims annihilation as the only consistent creed for a *sarant* ; the prayer even of unbelievers is, ‘Help thou my unbelief !’ and now, when spirits come and reveal themselves palpably to our senses, and claim recognition and get it, and declare to us that death has not destroyed them, or changed their affections, the stupendous demonstration, instead of being welcomed with exultation, is met with the complaint, ‘None of them have told us yet about the new life ; we are no wiser than of old.’

“‘No wiser?’ Does the fact itself leave us actually no wiser? Can any one who laments the loved one gone before, and longs for a re-union, say that the information which these apparitions vouchsafe is ‘valueless?’ Valueless? And the information they vouchsafe is that the departed still live. . . . It is not quite correct to say that the spirits tell us nothing about ‘the new life.’ Their accounts of it are as various as their characters. As the objective environments of a spirit are supposed to correspond with his moral and mental state, it is quite consistent that the descriptions of their new life by these revenants should differ greatly.

“It is a question, moreover, whether it would not require the development of a new sense in ourselves before we could fully comprehend the descriptions we might get of life in the spirit world. Even if we got something *new*—some truthful and extraordinary account of the ‘new life’—what would it amount to unless we had the faculty of accepting the truth when it was offered, and appreciating it accordingly?

“We are told that through Spiritualism ‘we are no wiser than of old.’ Truly, that depends. A mere fact adds nothing to our wisdom until the fact is accepted for what it is worth. All the information which the highest archangel could impart in regard to the ‘new life’ would profit us nothing unless there were the proper conditions of mind and heart, or the opening of a latent sense for its reception.

“The objection, therefore, that spirits ‘tell us nothing about the new life’ does not hold : they tell us a good deal, but what they tell us is valueless indeed so long as we are unqualified to form an opinion of its truth.”

There are others who think that something new has been revealed—in that they have communicated sure and certain intelligence of the



existence of the human soul immediately after death, and of the entire preservation of its identity; this is both new and valuable. To suppose that, if they appeared at all, they must necessarily furnish us with minute details as to a future state, is to suppose that such manifestations must necessarily be just as we should expect them to be, which Butler has shown to be absurd.

VII.—*Why do we not receive from spirits scientific and other knowledge of a higher character than that we now possess?*

Mr. Cromwell F. Varley, who, in electrical science at least, is the equal of any other authority, answers this question as follows :—

“They, ‘the spirits,’ told me that I myself had often experienced how imperfect words were as a means of communicating new ideas : that spirits in advance of the greatest intelligence upon earth do not use words in communicating with one another, because they have the power of instantly communicating the actual idea, as it exists in their own thought, to the other spirit ; and that when they telegraph to mortals, even through clairvoyant and trance mediums, who form by far the best channel for messages of high intelligence, they put the thoughts into the mind of the medium for that mind to translate into words through the mechanism of the brain and mouth, consequently what we usually get is a bad interpretation of a subject which the translator does not understand.” . . .

And further on he says :—

“I have failed at present to find a medium acquainted with science, and therefore capable of translating into intelligent language ideas of a scientific nature. This is not to be wondered at when we remember that there are thirty millions of British subjects, while there are probably not more than a hundred known mediums in the whole kingdom, and very few of these are well developed. This gives us one publicly-known medium to every 300,000 persons. Out of the thirty millions I do not suppose there are as many as one thousand well acquainted with natural philosophy, and accustomed to reason thereon. If, then, but one in thirty thousand is a scientific investigator, while there is only one medium to 300,000, we can only expect one scientific medium for each ten generations. Even if we assumed that there are 10,000 clear-headed natural philosophers in Great Britain, that would still only give us one good scientific medium to a generation. When it is further considered that the majority of our mediums are females, who from the mis-education of English ladies are rarely accustomed to accurate investigation, it is still less to be wondered that so little advance has been made in the scientific branch of the subject.”

Dr Watson, in his “Clock Struck Three,” says, ancient this point, p. 168 :—

“My conviction is, that those who investigate Spiritualism with a fair and reverential disposition will in time have no reason to be disappointed with the quality of the results which will reward their inquiry and labours. . . . Our reason and judgment must be exercised. . . . Those persons who raise the objection that the spirit messages are totally unworthy the source to which they are attributed,

and who look for displays of supernatural wisdom from disembodied souls, expect a great deal too much, and subject themselves to the charge of being unreasonable. As the mind is endowed and cultivated here, so will it be in the spirit world. The mass of mankind have had but little moral or intellectual cultivation. The change which we call death does not endow them with any faculties which they did not possess previously. Those who are ignorant will be ignorant still—till they learn more. The peculiar characteristics and idiosyncrasies of each will be carried with them. Taking this as the great fundamental principle, what must be the character of the mass of communication received from this source?"

VIII.—*These manifestations cause nervous diseases, infatuation, and insanity.*

"They do, when grossly abused; not otherwise. So does gold-seeking and property-getting. So does intellectual study. So does religion. So does every human interest and pursuit. Shall we therefore oppose all acquisition of property, all intellectual improvement, all religious instruction, and all the engrossing interests of life? Look into the catalogues of your insane hospitals, and see the classifications of the inmates, with reference to the cause of their insanity. Shall everything be condemned, the abuse of which results in disease, infatuation, and insanity? No. It must be shown that a thing has a strong, natural, and common tendency to produce mischief, or to draw its votaries into gross abuses, like intoxicating beverages, and other pernicious gratifications of personal appetite. Then *that* thing stands justly condemned. It is not enough that here and there an individual, or a small knot of persons, become over-zealous, run into extravagance, abuse their health, get infatuated, and fall into insanity. All this may sometimes happen in a good cause, and in spite of wise counsels from solid and judicious friends.

"But if the accounts were fairly rooted up, it would be found that ninety-nine of its respectful adherents had been rationalised, tranquilised, moralised, and improved, to one that had been injured. It will also be found, on taking equal numbers and comparing results, that the popular religion of the age, through all the great sects, has produced disease, infatuation, and insanity on its subjects, ten times where spirit manifestations have once.\*—Adin Ballou in "*Spirit Manifestation*."

IX.—*If departed spirits actually attempted to communicate with mortals, why not do so directly and unequivocally without this display of mediumship?*

I again quote Adin Ballou :—

"The whole universe is one vast complication of mediumship.

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\* A fact! Dr Crowell, in order to refute the calumny published by Dr Winslow, that Spiritualism drove people into lunatic asylums, and that there were 60,000 lunatics driven mad by it in the U.S.A., made careful inquiry, and found that for one case traceable to Spiritualism there were ten due to excitement caused by religious dogmas.

Spirits work within and upon matter. Interior substances demonstrate themselves through exterior and grosser ones. The higher and lower throughout nature are linked together by intervening grades. Why does not *God* appear personally, to speak and act? Why does He make use of all sorts of media to manifest Himself—to reveal His perfections—to communicate a knowledge of truth and duty to mankind? Why must there be patriarchs, prophets, saviours, and apostles? Why must man be born of woman, children be subsisted and trained by parents, pupils have a teacher and books, or electricity a conductor? Why is not each individual creature endowed with all the susceptibilities and powers necessary to Deific independence? These things are as they are. Shall we wrangle with facts, with nature, with God?

“Heaven, forming each on other to depend,  
A master, or a servant, or a friend,  
Bids each on other for assistance call,  
Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all.”

“Spirit media do not create themselves. They do not constitute themselves media. They only discover themselves to be such, and act according to their grade of mental and moral development. The mystery of their mediumship is as great to them as to others. Gladly would I see and converse with spirits personally, face to face, if such were the order of Nature, or the Divine Will. But as it is, and until more direct communication be granted, I deem it my privilege, no less than my duty, to make the best of opportunities as they are. I advise the objector to do the same.”

X.—*Why do not spirits forewarn us of many accidents, public or private, which their premonitions might avert?*

Eps Sargent answers this objection in his “Proof Palpable” as follows:—

“As for this objection, the Spiritualist is not bound to give any other reply than this: ‘I do not know.’ Any person who will take the trouble to investigate may learn that, in many individual cases, premonitions are given, and calamities are averted by spirit interposition. Why this is not done oftener, or in a manner to impress the public at large forcibly, is a matter on which we may speculate, but cannot speak with confidence.”

XI.—*But even admitting that a future life is proved by Spiritualism it is unnecessary, seeing that life and immortality were brought to light by Jesus Christ.*

I have already pointed out very clearly that palpable proof of the reality of the continuity of life is above all the one thing needful to-day. Divines may preach and teach as much as they like this special doctrine, but they fail to bring it home to the minds of men as an actual, living truth. Hence lies the mission of Spiritualism. But even admitting the all-sufficiency of Christ's open demonstration, and the dual nature and destiny of mankind, there is nothing in Spiritualism to clash therewith. Mr Henry Lewis, M.P. for Devonport, in his “Hints for the Evidences of Spiritualism,” says:—

"It must be borne in mind that Spiritualism does not purport to be a 'revelation,' but a republication (by natural means), adapted to the present circumstances of mankind, of the essential doctrine of the immortality of the soul. There is no passage in the New Testament which gives us to understand that no fresh knowledge, in addition to what was possessed in the apostolic times, on the subject of the unseen world, should ever by any means be conferred on mankind, while there are many passages that will bear an entirely different sense.

"The Reformation was no new revelation, but the republication by natural means (among which the art of printing is to be reckoned) of important truths which had long been darkened by a cloud of superstitious doctrines and usages, that for centuries scarce a trace of them was to be found in the world, save exceptional and fitful gleams. So Spiritualism, it may be said, is the recovery by natural means of certain powers enjoyed by the early Christians, which for some reason or other—perhaps by the worldliness and corruption of the Christian world—had fallen into decay and disuse, but traces of which are most distinctly to be found scattered through history, from the days of Jesus to our own time. There is nothing in the Bible that I have ever discovered to render this view untenable; on the contrary, there is much that would render it probable that a clearer knowledge and additional experience would, in the course of time, be vouchsafed to man."

XII.—*These new-fangled Miracles and Revelations will draw people away from the Bible. They tend to heresy, infidelity, irreligion, and immorality: Spiritualists generally are deniers of Christianity, and are absolutely hostile to the Bible and its teachings.*

Mr Thomas Shorter replies to this objection as follows:—

"As I cannot endorse the extravagant statements on this head, which have been so widely circulated, so neither would I conceal that there is, to a painful extent, a basis of truth for these exaggerations. But the point to be proved is, that this antagonism, to whatever extent it exists, originated in the spiritual belief, and is a consequence of it; that whereas before men accepted it they were Christians—since they received it, and through having received it, they have ceased to be so, and have become anti-Christian. Now, I think it will be found on investigation, that while there are spiritualists of almost every religious persuasion both in and out of Christendom, yet the Spiritualism of to-day has fallen chiefly among those who were outside of all churches and religious organisations.

"Professing Christians as a rule would not hear of Spiritualism, and they did not want to hear more about the spirit world. Herein seems to me its providential mission; and how sad, yet how natural, that those who call themselves the religious classes should be its bitterest opponents. They seemed to think it even a sin to inquire further, they had light enough already: perhaps a little more would show the dust and cobwebs in their spiritual habitations, and from very shame, they might be put to some trouble to sweep and garnish them afresh; so they concluded to put up their shutters, and, if Spiritualism met them in the streets, to frown upon it as not being either respectable or needed, and



to pass by on the other side. But, with those previously unable to realise a belief in anything beyond nature and the present life, it was not so. Viewing all things from the ultimate and outer plane of being, metaphysical and theological argument seemed to them at best but of dubious nature and of little eogeney. In place of doubtful disputations, they asked for facts. A reference to the facts of the Bible only added to their perplexities. They asked, if spirits manifested their presence, and intervened in human affairs, and if there was a providence in the Bible times, why are they not to be discerned in our time; if such were possible in past ages, they must be possible in this age, and the need of them is as great now as then? To this what satisfactory reply could be given by those who believed that this kind of evidence was now a matter of ancient history; and that God was nearer to the world in those days than in these? Instead of the miracles being evidence of the truths for which they were cited, they simply brought the books recording them into discredit, and caused their indiscriminate rejection. But the spiritual manifestations in the present time, under their own eyes, which they could witness for themselves; this was just the evidence they needed—just that adapted to their state. Indeed they were the very demonstration of which they were in quest. To them they were the revelation of the certainty of a spiritual world, and of a hereafter-life, which the current cold theology had obscured from view. Only with this new conviction could Christianity become to them a possibility; without it there was no fulcrum to which the lever of Christianity could be applied.

“True, many of the most important consequences, or ‘teachings’ of this fact would at first be but dimly perceived; their unfoldment would be gradual; old prejudices would impede the growth of new convictions, and perhaps arrest that progress which the soul from this new vantage-ground might have gained; but even so those in whose hearts this vital truth had gained possession must be nearer to Christianity than they were before, for it gave to them demonstrations of the future life of man with all the consequences that must necessarily flow from such a knowledge. None of the existing teachers of churches had been able to do them this inestimable service. The blunder is, in regarding as a consequence of Spiritualism notions and states of mind existing anterior to its reception, and derived from a false philosophy which Spiritualism, when studied in its principles, tends more or less quickly to eradicate.”

The “powers that be,” however, seem in all ages and times to have been the bitterest opponents of new light whether in matters secular or religious. Reformers have ever met with scant sympathy or assistance from institutions representing the orthodox thought of their day, and the movements they inaugurated or directed have been universally looked upon as subversive of all religion and morality, and as undermining the authority of the Bible.

Adin Ballou in his “Spirit Manifestations” remarks as follows:—

“So said the old Jews of Jesus, His miracles, and revelations. He was charged with designing to destroy the law and the prophets; with being a Samaritan and having a devil; with working His miracles by

the powers of Beelzebub; with being a sinner, a friend of publicans and sinners, a deceiver, a seditionist, a Sabbath-breaker, and a blasphemer. What truth or justice was there in all these charges? A great deal, in the judgment of the Scribes and Pharisees, chief priests and rulers of those days. A great deal in the opinion of thousands who honestly took their cue from those blind guides. But none at all, in the enlightened judgment of those who regard divine fundamental principles, absolute truth, and essential righteousness as *eternal realities*, and mere words, names, forms, and institutions as *changeable conveniences*. Just so it is, and will prove in the present case.

"Whatever of divine fundamental principles, absolute truth, and essential righteousness there is in the Bible, in the popular religion, and in the established churches, will stand. It cannot be done away. On the contrary, it will be corroborated and fulfilled by Spiritualism. I have yet to hear of the first believer in these manifestations whose faith has been diminished in what is called the supernatural of the Bible, or in its fundamental principles, or in its essential righteousness as consisting in love to God and fellow-man. But we *know* that many who had no faith at all in the so-called *supernatural* of the Bible, and very little in a future existence, before witnessing the manifestations, have thereby been brought to believe in the reality of both, with a strength of conviction greater than that evinced by the generality of reputed orthodox Christians. Why should it be otherwise? Is it likely that one who is sure he has seen doors open and shut, heavy substances moved about, a human body upborne, without mortal contrivance or effort, will believe less that Jesus walked on the water, that an angel rolled away a great stone from the sepulchre, or that Peter was released from prison by a spirit? Because one who has seen brilliant lights and appearances of flame, caused, as he verily believes, by spirits, will he have less faith that the angel of God manifested himself to Moses in a burning bush? or that tongues of cloven flames sat on the Apostles, at the great spiritual manifestation at Pentecost? Shall one hear all manner of sounds, caused by spiritual agency, even to a thundering roar which shakes the whole house, and therefore grow more sceptical about the thunders of Sinai? or the 'great noise as of a mighty rushing wind,' and shaking of the place where the Apostles prayed? Shall one be convinced that spirits can actually write on paper, wood, and stone, with pens, pencils, &c., and therefore have less faith that a mighty angelic spirit inscribed the Decalogue on two tables of stone, and reached them forth out of a thick cloud to Moses? Will men, who are sure that they have conversed with the spirits of their departed friends for hours, therefore doubt whether Moses and Elias conversed with Jesus, at His transfiguration on the Mount? Anti-Bible scepticism does not thrive on such nourishment. Neither does irreligion and immorality gain strength by the almost uniform religious, moral, and reformatory communications made in connection with these manifestations. When the popular pulpit shall preach and insist upon as high a piety, as pure a morality, as devoted a philanthropy, and as practical a Christianity as are set forth in these spirit messages, it will have undergone a great change for the better."

Spiritualism is not, *per sé*, wholly evil. It is true that evil does exist in the movement, but that it can be found in greater proportions there than in other institutions, or that it is essentially an outcome of communion with the dead, I utterly deny. So thinks Dr Crowell. He says :—

“Spiritualism, as misrepresented in the lives, sentiments, and language of some people, is as humiliated as Christianity is by others, and, like the latter, it is capable of being used as a cloak for excesses which are abhorrent to just and virtuous minds, and, also, like Christianity, it has its Judases to betray it, its Peters to deny it, and from outside its Sauls to persecute it. There is nothing so exalted or so pure that it is secure against simulation and misrepresentation. Vice affects virtue; ambition and pride ape humility; the rogue affects honesty; demagogues claim to be patriots; politicians to be statesmen; there are usurpers as well as legitimate kings; the mock sun strives to share the glories of the true; Christ had His anti-christs, and even God Himself is counterfeited by a host of false gods.”

So also J. E. Edmunds, for many years Judge of the Supreme Court of New York, who once remarked :—

“Sad is the mistake of him who, from a superficial examination, ventures to pronounce it all evil. As well, when finding fanaticism, ignorance, and bigotry amongst the Churches, may he condemn all professors alike as wanting in charity and in knowledge; or observing, as he cannot fail to have done, how many absurd creeds have flourished, and have faded in the Christian world, he may as well insist—as, alas! too many have done—that the sure religion of Christ is a farce.

“He will find precedents for such a mode of reasoning in the olden time, but he will also find an abiding condemnation of it in the after ages.

“It is true I have sometimes heard, and sometimes heard of, vague, trivial, and absurd communications, but never any positively mischievous. On the other hand, their general character has been such as to warrant me in saying that I have been struck with their beauty—their sublimity at times—and the uniformly elevated tone of morals which they teach. They are eminently practical in their character, and the lessons they teach are those of love and kindness, and are addressed to the calm, deliberate reason of man, asking from him no blind faith, but a careful inquiry and a deliberate judgment.”

Epes Sargent says :—

“The attempts to make Spiritualism responsible for the heresies and vagaries of certain persons calling themselves Spiritualists are manifestly unjust. Accusations are often brought that Spiritualism teaches Free-love, Pantheism, Socialism, &c. As well say that the Newtonian philosophy teaches these things. Spiritualism is no more responsible for nominal Spiritualists than Christianity is for nominal Christians, among which last may be counted Free-love Anabaptists, Mormons, and the brigands of Italy.”

R. Dale Owen is also very much to the point. He says :—

“If, after a varied experience of sixteen years in different countries, I am entitled to offer an opinion, it is, that if such spiritual communi-



cations be sought in an earnest, becoming spirit, the views presented will, in the vast majority of cases, be in strict accordance with the teachings of Christ, such as we may reasonably conceive these to have been from the testimony of His evangelical biographers. They touch upon many things indeed which He left untouched, but the spirit is absolutely identical. They breathe the very essence of His divine philosophy."

Commenting upon the alleged tendency of Spiritualism to undermine the teaching of the Bible, Dr Crowell states that if he were sent to a people on a mission of Spiritualism, and were restricted to the use of one book, he would, to prove spiritual intercourse, present them with the Bible as containing the strongest intrinsic evidence of its truth. To prove the dangers attendant upon its abuse, he says he would refer them to the Old Testament, and for evidence of its divine and holy character, would urge the study of the New, and the adoption of the example and precepts of its heroes and martyrs as set forth therein. As for myself, I fully agree with all this. The Bible has everything to gain and nothing to lose by the universal acceptance of the facts and philosophy of Spiritualism.

XIII.—*Spirit intercourse is unlawful. It is identical with witchcraft, and as such is expressly forbidden of God.*

The late Mr Andrew Leighton, of Liverpool, a well-known Spiritualist, said in his preface to the English edition of Mr Adin Ballou's work on "Spirit Manifestations:"—

"No: It is permitted by God, for it is a fact against which no intrinsic reason exists. Many of the highest, the noblest, the purest of all ages have pursued it. Nothing can be alleged against it which is not equally pertinent against similar intercourse with spirits in the flesh. It is a mere weakness and a delusion to assert to the contrary. It is true such intercourse was prohibited amongst the Jews. So was eating the flesh of the hare, the swine, and other animals. So was reaping the corners of fields; so gathering the gleanings. So the gendering of mules; so the sowing of a field with mingled seed; so weaving mingled linen and woollen garments; so hundreds of other things, for all of which possibly sufficient reason existed in Mosaic times, but which, if ever binding on any persons but Jews, have certainly no obligation for us in these days."

It is amusing to note to what straits objectors of this class are brought. This is most clearly indicated in the following letter, which was written by the late William Howitt in 1863, and which shows how absurd it is to take one's stand upon texts such as that in Deuteronomy—"Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek ye after wizards to defile yourselves." The letter in question was in answer to a lady who had signed herself "Rustica," who had written to the *Evening Standard*, denouncing Spiritualism as sorcery. Mr Howitt says:—

"A friend has drawn my attention to a letter signed 'Rustica' in your impression of Wednesday last. 'Rustica' is in great trouble on account of the breaches of the Mosaic law by Spiritualists. The texts



which she quotes, and which she thinks binding on us, because they are in the Jewish law, are quite correct as far as they go; but if 'Rustica' imagines that we here in England, in 1863, are living under the Jewish law, I am bound to add to her trouble by bringing to her knowledge a number of other breaches of it. For if we are to be Jews and not Christians, we must take the Jewish law altogether. It is not a law which allows of picking and choosing, cutting a endgel out of its wood to break our neighbour's head, and leaving another because it would break our own. One of the most striking characteristics of this law is, that it demands a total acceptance of it and obedience to it. Here I quote, for the benefit of 'Rustica' and all such ardent Israelites, the concluding words of Moses himself, after having recapitulated the entire provisions of this code: 'Cursed be he that confirmeth not *all* the words of this law to do them.' (Deut. xxvii. 26.)

"Now as I take it, from the name she has assumed, that 'Rustica' is a lady living in the country, and that she is, no doubt, a grave matron, having a husband, a troop of active lads, and a number of men and maid servants; in fact, that she is living as the lady of some good country house—I will point out to her what she has to do to show us that she is honest and in earnest, and how, in short, she must act to get rid of her sorrows over the breaches of the Jewish law. And in doing this, she must excuse me using some very plain words, because as she is a zealous stickler for the Jewish law, and therefore, undoubtedly has it read daily in her family, this phraseology must be very familiar to her, and by no means offensive to her ears polite.

"Well, then, what she has to do is, to send at once for the family surgeon, and have her husband, her boys, and all her man-servants, subjected to the greatest of Jewish rites. This rite is perfectly indispensable under the Jewish law both in Jews and in Gentiles. Every servant and 'stranger within the gates' is bound to submit to it. Let 'Rustica' turn for proofs of this to Genesis xvii. 10, and to the rest of that chapter.

"As soon as her husband recovers from the effects of this rite, 'Rustica' will, of course, desire to see him inferior to none of the patriarchs in all Hebrew customs, and she will, therefore, have to look out for three or four additional wives for him and bring them home, and as many fair handmaids for concubines. For the propriety of this she may consult the history of the patriarchs generally.

"But having now made a very good Jew, and a most exemplary patriarch of her husband, 'Rustica' will unfortunately find that she has not brought, by any means, the whole of the exacting law into operation. Leviticus xvii. 10-14 will start up and inform her that every man who has eaten flesh with the blood in it must be cut off from his people; and as in this un-Israelitish nation no man can have reached manhood, nor even boyhood, without eating black-puddings, fowls that have had their necks wrung instead of their throats cut, and hares strangled in nooses by poachers instead of being shot, 'Rustica' will have nothing for it but to muster all the sturdy clowns of her parish, and make them haul away her husband, her sons, and her men-

servants to the village green, and there 'cut them off from their people' by the Mosaic mode of stoning them to death.

"But 'Rustica,' as the vindicator of the Mosaic law, cannot stop here. This law is equally decisive against all who have gathered sticks on a Saturday—the Jewish Sabbath (Numbers xv. 32-36). 'Rustica' will, therefore, have to assemble all the old women who have been guilty of the deadly sin of gathering sticks on a Saturday. She will have no possible escape from this; for the texts referred to are most peremptory on the subject, and relate the summary infliction of the sentence on a man caught in the act.

"Having dispatched all the old women and a good many children of the parish for gathering sticks, she will have then to deal with the 'presumptuous persons' there (Numb. xv. 30). 'The soul that doeth aught presumptuously (whether he be born in the land or a stranger), the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.' The next verse says, he 'shall be utterly cut off.' By the time she has dispatched the presumptuous—and I am afraid she will find the number great, unless her parish be much more humble-minded than parishes in general—she would have the blasphemers and cursers on her hands, and they must all be put to death (Lev. xiv. 11-16). All these being added to the gory stony heap, the disobedient to parents, and those whose parents said they were gluttons and drunkards, will have to be stoned too (Deut. xxi. 18, 20, 21).

"By this time 'Rustica' will have brought her family and her parish to a tolerably pretty pass in carrying out the Mosaic law; nay, if she insist on its orderly execution, I doubt she will not have left a single soul—man, woman, or child—alive; for 'the stiff-necked and uncircumcised generation,' the eaters of black-puddings, of strangled hares, of hens and pullets with twisted necks, the gatherers of sticks on a Saturday, the cursers and disobedient, the drunkards and gluttons, make so formidable a portion of ordinary population, that the man who escapes 'Rustica's' zeal for the Mosaic law must be more than mortal.

"But, as long before the consummation of this catastrophe—the result of an attempt to inaugurate the Jewish code in this Gentile country—'Rustica' would herself be arrested, tried and condemned for manifold capital offences against English law, and would be on the way to the gallows. No doubt the good chaplain would inform her of another book besides the Old Testament, a book called the *New Testament*, a new and very different law called Christianity—which 'Rustica,' living in some very rustic place, seems never to have heard of, or if she has, does not happen to mention."

Mr. Shorter points out the real distinction between lawful spirit communion and sorcery in the following extract from his work, "The Two Worlds:"—

"The truth is, the Bible throughout recognises that there are two kinds of Spiritualism—the good and the bad; the divine and the diabolical; the lawful and the unlawful. The latter, doubtless, is prohibited; the former was practised by patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and by Christ Himself. Of this kind are the spiritual gifts of the early

Church, and the Modern Spiritualists, and concerning which Paul told the members of the Church at Corinth he would not have them ignorant, bidding them earnestly to covet the best gifts. It is a sheer evasion to say, 'the instances in the Bible were exceptional cases, and always emanated from God, and are totally different to necromancy or Spiritualism.' This is only asserted; it is not even attempted to be proved."

Mr. A. E. Newton, a well-known American Spiritualist, remarking upon this point, says:—

"If the prohibitions given through Moses included good as well as evil (spirits), then they were transgressed by Moses himself; for did he not talk with 'the angel at the bush?' and did he not receive the law 'by the ministrations of angels,' spending forty days with them on the mount? It was transgressed also by Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and doubtless all the prophets; for do they not describe their interviews with spiritual beings, sometimes terming them 'men' and again 'angels of the Lord?'"

Mr. Thomas Shorter has very truly indicated the reason why spirit intercourse was forbidden to the Jews.

"Those who question or deny the lawfulness of spirit-communication on grounds deduced from Scripture, rest their objections mainly on the prohibitions in the Mosaic code. But surely it is by no means self-evident that we are now under these prohibitions, that they apply to us and to all time. Do we not, in fact, practically ignore many of them, such as those which forbade the eating of hare, swine, or any kind of fat—the wearing garments of mingled linen and woollen, and the lighting of fires on the Sabbath day? Do we now stone Sabbath-breakers, burn witches, and enforce the penalties of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth? Do we not, in fine, feel that we are justified in doing many things which the Jewish law interdicted, and in not doing many things which it enjoined? To prove that any prohibition of that law is binding on Christians, it needs to be shown that the original ground of obligation still exists—that it was not in any way dependent upon considerations of time, place, and circumstance, but that (like the Moral Law of the Ten Commandments) it was permanent and universal. Let us, then, endeavour to ascertain the nature and ground of this particular prohibition to the Jewish people.

"In this inquiry we must bear in mind that the Bible represents the Jews as a peculiar people, immediately and, as it were, visibly, under the Divine Government, called out to protest against the universal idolatry of the polytheistic nations by whom they were surrounded, and to be to all the earth a witness for the one living and true God. All their institutions, laws, and observances, had reference primarily to this end, and in many cases are scarcely intelligible unless considered in this relation. Keeping this steadily in view, let us ask, What was the idolatry against which they were called upon to bear this emphatic testimony? Whence did it originate? How was it sustained? It is necessary to arrive at a right understanding of these questions before we can form a correct judgment upon the subject of our present inquiry.

"I shall not propound a theory of my own; I am quite content to take the exposition given by, perhaps, the most learned and able opponent of the current spiritual manifestations on the ground of their alleged evil character and anti-scriptural teachings—the Rev. Charles Beecher, who, in a *Review of the Spiritual Manifestations*, read before the Congregational Association of New York and Brooklyn, in his chapter, 'On the Teachings of the Bible,' thus sums up his argument on this head:—

"Both the law and the history therefore concede the reality of the practice doomed with death, and the reason of the penalty is manifest. Polytheism was the disease to be cauterised. The worship of the dead was the root of Polytheism. Converse with the dead was the root of worship. Odylie arts (*i.e.*, the understanding and supply of proper conditions) were the root of converse. Therefore, the law struck at the root, by prohibiting the whole on pain of death.' 'The Baalim' of the Old Testament, he tells us, 'were lords, heroes, deified dead men. Hence it is said, "They joined themselves unto Baal Peor, they ate the sacrifices of the dead;"—the two lines of the parallelism repeating the same idea in a different form;' and, he adds, it was to these 'deified dead men,' to whom, as testified by Moses and the Psalmist, 'they sacrificed their sons and their daughters.' Need we wonder, then, that when consulting the dead fostered these idolatrous and inhuman practices, that to cut them off the more completely from such dangers, and from those who practised these arts, using them for evil purposes, they should be wholly interdicted to the Jews, especially if we bear in mind that spiritual and divine guidance was otherwise vouchsafed them. We are told that when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, 'neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.' These being then the authorised and divinely-appointed means of spiritual communication. To depart from these and inquire after the manner of the heathen, therefore not only implied in itself a tendency to idolatry, but was an open disobedience to the command of their Divine King—an act of rebellion against Him. Hence it is said, 'The sin of rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.' The sin of both consisting in casting off that allegiance which they owed to Jehovah, their rightful Sovereign."

So also Dr. Crowell:—

"It was undoubtedly necessary under the state of things then existing in Judæa, that witches and sorcerers should be severely punished, as every sensible, proper-minded person to-day would desire to see similar practices prohibited under the severest penalties, for their results were of the most demoralising and dangerous character. They were vile instruments in the hands of the vicious and designing, which were used with deadly effect upon the credulous and ignorant; and as hundreds of other crimes were then punished with death, there was no inconsistency, nor any exceptional injustice in awarding the same punishment to this crime."

He continues his argument as follows:—

"The Israelites were by nature an idolatrous people, and in spirit intercourse attracted idolatrous spirits, and association with them in these practices was inevitably attended with the inculcation and



adoption of idolatrous and debasing sentiments, and their faith was constantly being undermined, and many times was totally subverted. The prohibition, therefore, in every light was a necessary one, a—care for the integrity of the faith of the nation, and for the existence of the nation itself, demanded it, and it was eminently proper; but it is evident that communication with the spirit-world, when directed by what was then considered enlightened judgment, was not condemned.

“Throughout the Bible, wherever witchcraft, sorcery, necromancy, &c., are spoken of, it is in the spirit of entire confidence in their reality as powers, and in harmony with the universal belief of the times, and the denunciations of the practice of these arts were always levelled against it as a practice of real arts, and not against any pretensions to certain assumed powers which did not exist.

“So with false prophets, they were perhaps as numerous as the true, and throughout Biblical history, wherever we find true prophets we also find the false, and they were often the subjects not alone of denunciation but of the punishment of death, and nowhere in the Scriptures, neither in the Old or New Testaments, is supermundane agency denied them, for the language used in regard to them is: ‘The Lord sent a lying spirit’ to speak through them; or as it was with Saul; ‘but the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.’

“If the propriety and necessity of the Levitical laws against witches, and false gods, or evil spirits, are maintained, then it must be admitted that they did exist, and if they existed then they must exist now, for the same natural laws that governed then govern now, and there is not in the Bible a syllable which can be construed into an intimation that they should cease to exist. Orthodoxy claims that all the malevolent agencies, such as Satan and the evil spirits that act as his instruments, are still in active existence, and surely in the olden time they found no more efficient means through which to speak than sorcerers and witches, and these still exist, and all Biblical evidence and analogical reasoning tend to show that these agencies should still exist.

“When we regard witchcraft in the 16th and 17th centuries—its claims to the same paternity as the witchcraft of the Bible, the evils that flowed from it directly and indirectly—I believe we must allow that evil spirits were at its helm during its reign in Europe, as they were during its sway with the Israelites. If from the identity of character, and from the marked similarity of the witches with those of the Bible, it be evident and admitted that they were of the same stock, and that diabolical or low spirit agency was concerned in the occurrences at both periods, then it follows that evil or dark spirits do exist, and they do manifest through witches and others, and the truth of spirit intercourse, though in a hideous form, is undeniable.

“If this again be admitted, I would ask if evil spirits can communicate with men through depraved and corrupt mediums, why cannot elevated spirits communicate through moral and virtuous mediums? Is it that the spirits from Hades have a larger liberty, and possess greater power, than the spirits or angels from Heaven? Are

the former under less restraint than the latter, and is it a part of the punishment of those that they are permitted to vex and afflict mortals, while it is a portion of the reward of the blessed spirits that they shall witness the misery of their dearest friends, and be destitute of the power, like that of the evil spirits, to approach and to succour them?"

And further on he continues:—

"The practice of witchcraft and sorcery—which were only degraded forms of spirit intercourse in ancient times—were generally associated with vile and godless ceremonies, in which evil spirits were often expressly invoked, with blasphemous words and rites. The objects to be obtained were solely of a selfish, oftentimes of a criminal character, and exactly calculated to attract mischievous and depraved spirits. The whole atmosphere of these proceedings was stagnant with impurity, and spirits in any considerable degree advanced could not exist within its limits.

"That these practices were associated with idolatrous abominations, is evident from many passages, as in 2 Kings xxiii. 24, where we are told, that 'moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah, and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away.'

"As idolatry was the besetting sin of the Israelites, partly from the promptings of their own depraved natures, partly from their association with the idolatrous nations around them, and then again from the temptations of spirits from these nations, so the spirits drawn to them through their sorceries were of like tendencies and inclinations, and witchcraft was necessarily a support to idolatry."

#### XIV.—*It is all of the Devil; have nothing to do with it.*

"The Alpha of these objections was, *it is all a humbug*. The Omega is, *it is all of the Devil*. When the Pharisees were driven from all their other objections to the excellent works and miracles of Jesus. they blasphemed, saying, *He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils; it is all of the Devil—have nothing to do with it*. Had they any proof that it was of the Devil? Not one particle. Had they any decent reason to suspect any such thing? Not one. Did they really believe it was of the Devil? Not at all. Were they not under strong conviction that Jesus and His works were of God? Yes. Why then did they blaspheme? Because their hearts and their heads were perverse. They were driven to the wall for a pretext. They were filled with vexation and madness. Therefore, they wilfully and presumptuously ascribed the manifestations of the divine and spiritual power to the Devil. Thus they sinned against the Holy Ghost, bound themselves over in bonds of judicial blindness to ages of unescapable darkness and condemnation. The Pharisees of our day are imitating those of old. *It is all of the Devil*, say they. But they say not this till after they have said everything else, and been forced to confess the reality of super-mortal agency. If they could have made it appear that these spirit manifestations were caused by any agency in this world of flesh and blood, they would never have ascribed them to the Devil. Nor do they now believe that they really are of the Devil. If they sincerely be-

lieved this, they would hail them as God-sent, or at least God-permitted, demonstrations to a sceptical generation, that there *is*, beyond denial, such a deific Devil as their theology assumes to teach. And if, withal, the revelations, miracles, and general influence of this demonstration had been obviously *devilish*, they would have been quite satisfied. Alas ! for them, there is too much of *truth and good* in it to give it an *infernal aspect*. Bold as their tone is, they are by no means sure that it is the work of the Devil. An irresistible conviction plagues them that it is what it purports to be. It is ominous to them of an approaching religious, moral, and social revolution to which they are utterly opposed. This is what troubles them. This is what provokes them to say, for sheer *effect*, 'It is all of the Devil ; have nothing to do with it.' They have no honest assurance that it is of the Devil. But they hate and dread its testimony. So, being in too perverse a state of head and heart to give it a respectful examination, they shut their eyes, stop their ears, trample on the light proffered them, and cry out, 'Devil ! Devil ! it is all the work of the Devil ; have nothing to do with it !'—*Adin Ballou*.

Dr Crowell pertinently asks :—

"How long is it since it was discovered that the Devil takes unwearied pains in pointing out to men their failings and vices, and the consequences flowing from them ; and urges and insists upon the vital necessity of abandoning them as the only means of reaching Heaven ? How long is it since he began teaching the beauty of holiness—of charity and benevolence ? The position of an opposer on this ground proves that he knows nothing practically of Spiritualism ; for had he knowledge of it, it would be impossible that he could for a moment honestly entertain the idea of the Devil having any active agency in the matter ; and the charge has never been made by any person who has had any considerable knowledge of its phenomena and teachings. It should not be forgotten that 'God works in a mysterious way,' and sometimes by means so humble and apparently insignificant that the wisdom of the earth accounts them foolishness."

XV.—*Why has not Spiritualism come to mankind before—why in the 19th century ?*

Why was it that Christianity did not make its appearance for over 400 years ? The reply is, the world was not prepared for it. So with Spiritualism. It has come like Christianity at the proper time, when the Church as well as the world needed something more spiritual than the materialistic tendencies of the present age. Spiritualism is, in fact, as old as the hills. There never was an age or a country in which it has not appeared in some form or other : the Bible is full of it—it is found in the literature of all peoples. Hitherto, however, its aims and purposes have been greatly misunderstood, and spiritual gifts have been prostituted to obtain power, and used to establish a sacerdotal and religious despotism ; and our care now should be to prevent the Spiritualism of to-day degenerating once more into superstition and idolatry.

R. Dale Owen writes ancient this :—



"Why now, at this age of the world? Why not sooner, long ago, centuries since? In reply, one might suggest that the Atlantic has always been there, though thousands of years elapsed ere a Columbus adventured its passage. One might ask when the diurnal motion of the earth, when the circulation of the blood, when the fall of aërolites, was first accepted as truth by science. But I rest not the case in generalities like these. I believe that Spiritualism, in its present phase, could not have been the growth of an age much earlier than our own. In its present phase, in distorted form, it has appeared from time to time in past ages, to the terror and the unutterable suffering of the world. The holiest things are the most deadly when they are profaned.

"Ye cannot bear them now.' In these words we may find the clue to the late appearance of Modern Spiritualism. Certain debasing superstitions had to disappear before the world was worthy of it. The letter which killeth had itself to die, and the spirit which giveth life had to replace it, before the wiser and the better portion of those who have gone before us could find such sympathy as would attract them to earth, and meet such reception here as would justify their efforts to enlighten us."

XVI.—*The age of miracles has ceased, therefore Spiritual phenomena are impossible.*

Those who have followed me so far will have seen that Spiritualism regards neither the so-called miracles of the past, nor the Spiritual phenomena occurring in our midst to-day, as supernatural in their nature and origin. A close investigation of Spiritualism has shown that the abnormal phenomena, classed as miracles in the past, are identical with spirit manifestations, and as the latter appear to conform to, and to be governed by natural laws, there is no valid reason for supposing that the ancient miracles were not likewise governed. But even admitting for a moment, for argument's sake, that the wonders recorded in the Bible were miraculous and supernatural in character, it can by no means be taken for granted that the objection now under consideration is true. On the contrary, the statement is a pure assumption, alike gratuitous and unwarranted. "No confirmation of this notion," says Mr. Shorter, in his "Two Worlds," "can be found in the language of Jesus, or in the teachings of the New Testament; there is no intimation therein that guidance, revelation, influx from the spiritual universe, ceased with the Jewish dispensation;—no limitation of the 'spiritual gifts' of the Church to that, or to any age: the contrary seems rather to be implied. I can see no reason for their withdrawal, no indications of this being the fact, but I do find very explicit declarations of their continuance. Jesus distinctly promised to supplement His earthly teaching. He told His disciples that they could not bear the whole truth; that consequently many things were left unsaid which should, after His death, be communicated to them by the Spirit of Truth, and that this self-same Spirit should abide with His followers "even unto the end of the world," guiding and teaching them.



XVII.—*Spiritual phenomena are produced by legerdemain: professional conjurers have over and over again exposed the modus operandi.*

In this connection I shall merely quote two well-known Spiritualists who have written on this subject. First, then, "M.A., Oxon."

"I am concerned to say again, that the so-called exposure of the *modus operandi* of a professional psychic by a professional conjurer is of so little importance as to be practically *nihil ad rem*. Mr Maskelyne, on his own stage, surrounded by his own confederates, and using his own prepared apparatus, does something which burlesques the results obtained by Slade. What then? If the imitation were moderately good, it would be a creditable counterfeit, such as the skilful illusionist should have no difficulty in producing on his own terms. The stage thunder, the stage dinner, the false sovereign, the mask and wig of the actor, may all be made more or less like the reality which they counterfeit. Mr Maskelyne's is a sorry piece of illusion; but were it never so good, what would it prove? Simply that a thing can be imitated when unlimited means of so doing are provided. That is hardly a point which we need to have demonstrated, and if those who lay stress upon it find any comfort in that demonstration they are welcome to it. If, however, they flatter themselves that it extends any further, then they must be advised to commence the study of logic."

Mr W. Crookes takes up an exactly similar position. He says:—

"It is obvious that this theory can only account for a very small proportion of the facts observed. I am willing to admit that some so-called mediums, of whom the public have heard much, are arrant impostors, who have taken advantage of the public demand for spiritualistic excitement to fill their purses with easily earned guineas, whilst others, who have no pecuniary motive for imposture, are tempted to cheat, it would seem, solely by a desire for notoriety. I have met with several cases of imposture; some very ingenious, others so palpable that no person who has witnessed the genuine phenomena could be taken in by them. An inquirer into the subject, finding one of these cases at his first initiation, is disgusted with what he detects at once to be an imposture, and he not unreasonably gives vent to his feelings, privately or in print, by a sweeping denunciation of the whole genus 'medium!' Again, with a thoroughly genuine medium, the first phenomena which are observed are generally slight movements of the table, and faint taps under the medium's hands or feet. These, of course, are quite easy to be imitated by the medium, or any one at the table. If, as sometimes occurs, nothing else takes place, the sceptical observer goes away with the firm impression that his superior acuteness detected cheating on the part of the medium, who was consequently afraid to proceed with any more tricks in his presence. He, too, writes to the newspapers exposing the whole imposture, and probably indulges in moral sentiments about the sad spectacle of persons, apparently intelligent, being taken in by imposture which he detected at once."

"There is a wide difference between the tricks of a professional conjurer, surrounded by his apparatus and aided by any number of concealed assistants and confederates, deceiving the senses by clever sleight

of hand, on his own platform, and the phenomena occurring in the presence of Mr. Home, which take place in the light, in a private room, that almost up to the commencement of the *séances* has been occupied as a living room, and surrounded by private friends of my own, who not only will not countenance the slightest deception, but who are watching narrowly everything that takes place. Moreover, Mr. Home has frequently been searched before and after the *séances*, and he *always* offers to allow it. During the most remarkable occurrences I have occasionally held both his hands, and placed my feet on his feet. On no single occasion have I proposed a modification of arrangements, for the purpose of rendering trickery less possible, which he has not at once assented to, and frequently he has himself drawn attention to tests which might be tried."

XVIII.—*But even if Spiritualism is true—Cui bono?*

The benefit or use to be derived from the knowledge of a fact may not be always palpable, and to sincere seekers after truth the question should be, not its use, but the establishment of its reality. When this is fairly proved its utility generally becomes apparent in time. With regard to the use of Spiritualism it is hard to enumerate in a few lines the many benefits to be derived from a knowledge of it. The *Scientific American*, hanging its eulogy of Spiritualism on the conditional peg, once said:—

"If true it will become the one grand event of the world's history, it will give an imperishable lustre of glory to the nineteenth century. Its discoverer will have no rival in renown, and his or her name will be written high above any other. For Spiritualism involves a stultification of what are considered the most certain and fundamental conclusions of science. . . . If the pretensions of Spiritualism have a rational foundation, no more important work has been offered to men of science than their verification. A realisation of the dreams of the *elixir vite*, the philosopher's stone, and the perpetual motion, is of less importance to mankind than the verification of Spiritualism."

Adin Ballou, whom I have quoted several times, thinks that such an objection suggests a ready reply in all true minds.

"Where," says he, "is there another theme more intensely interesting to universal man than this of spirit existence and manifestation? To insinuate the contrary is to mock the deepest yearnings of human nature in its best moments, and to ignore its entire religious history. Men instinctively grasp at whatever reveals an existence beyond the dissolution of the body, or reaffirms it, or affords the least indication that the departed can possibly find means of communicating with their earthly friends. Is it presumable, then, that the astonishing phenomena before us will not remunerate the pains of decent examination? And shall it be asked what good is to be expected from it even if demonstrated to be what it purports? It will convert thousands from gross infidelity. It will cure millions from involuntary semi-scepticism. It will render a future existence *real* to the whole human race. It will reinvigorate every great religious and moral truth, heretofore revealed to mankind. It will intensify all the sublime notions that

urge human nature on to a heavenly destiny. It will advance from step to step of demonstration till death shall be disarmed of its terrors, and will usher in a new era of faith, hope, and charity."

I have now dealt with the principal of the many objections urged against Spiritualism, and it will have been seen that some are due to ignorance, that others arise from a misconception, and that not a few are utterly false. Before concluding this paper, however, I should like to point out several very glaring fallacies which obtain with relation to this subject in the popular mind, and I will at once plunge in *medias res*.

#### XIX.—*Spirit Communication not Infallible.*

There are those who consider that a spirit message or communication is necessarily infallible, and by blindly accepting all that spirits teach as gospel, sooner or later get deceived, and retire in disgust from the subject. This is altogether a mistake. Spirits are but disembodied men and women, and the mere change by death from one sphere of existence to another, though in some measure conferring higher and clearer powers and perceptions, does not make them any better or any worse—neither more nor less reliable.

The same discrimination and common sense should be brought to bear upon the subject as is brought to bear upon affairs of every-day life, and we are not more bound to implicitly trust to everything a spirit may say than we are obliged to accept the advice of any casual acquaintance we may meet in the street. We know that many men in the body wilfully deceive and lead astray their fellows, and it is equally certain that men out of the body have done and still will do the same if we choose to surrender our reason to them and be wholly guided by their advice. Of the two classes of investigators, the one who blindly accepts as infallibly true all communications from the spirit world is probably far more likely to be deceived and led astray than the confirmed devil-fearer, who only sees in each and every spirit an emissary of Satan. The following words of Robert Dale Owen are full of wisdom with relation to this subject. He remarks:—

"The lesson taught by a thousand warnings from the past is unmistakable; and it is of vital moment that we heed it. It is dangerous for men and women who are confirmed in certain old superstitions, or who believe in their own possession of infallible truth, to put themselves in the way of communings with a higher sphere of being; they cannot bear them yet. We seek aid or enlightenment for another world in vain, unless we enter the spiritual school, not only in a reverent spirit, but in a fit frame of mind. We must seek ere we find, and we must seek in that catholic temper which is willing to put to the proof all things, and to accept the truth wherever found. It is not given to dogmatism, shut up in its contracted shell, to distinguish the still small voice; it hears but the echo of its own delusions. Except we be converted from wisdom in our own conceit, except we draw near to the shrine as little children, the spiritual voices in their purity will not reach our ears.

"It is with the teachings of Spiritualism as with the praying of

men; they are but mockeries unless approached in a becoming spirit.\*

"But, for the reasons above set forth, even able searchers, earnestly and reverently prosecuting inquiries into the character of modern Spiritual revealings, if still haunted by the idea of Satanic agency, may be led into a grievous error, the very opposite of that which sets up all Spiritual messages as Gospel truths."

So also another writer, to wit, Mr Shorter, who says :—

"The investigator soon learns that spirits are not a minor kind of gods, but that they are men like ourselves, differing from us only in not having the same visible body—that they are fallible, and, so far as at present known, no more to be implicitly relied on, as guides of opinion and conduct, than men on earth. This is the order of Providence. God has given to each of us conscience and reason, not to rust in sloth, but to be kept pure and bright by constant use and ever-increasing exercise. It is true that in their use we may make many mistakes, and it is pretty certain that we shall do so, even though we exert our utmost efforts to avoid them; and this should teach us to be modest and charitable; but the sum of all mistakes, arising from the limitation and imperfection of the human faculties, will be far short of the capital mistake of surrendering them to another's guidance. The true spiritual theory is not necessarily that which spirits teach, but that which commends itself to the deepest intuitions of the spiritual man, and the fullest and freest exercise of his reasoning powers."

Before passing from this point, I would draw attention to the danger of seeking worldly advancement by spirit agency. The following words of warning are well worthy of consideration :—

"Especially should the Spiritualist be on his guard against seeking worldly wealth and profit through spiritual revealings. The very attempt tends to attract spirits of a low order. The medium who submits to it incurs grave dangers; while the votary puts himself in the sure road to delusion and disappointment. A medium who is true to his high trust will refuse to enter a path thus perilous and misleading. If, sometimes, when all human effort has failed, spiritual aid or advice in such matters is volunteered, it should, even then, be received with great caution. Money-changers are out of place in the spiritual temple. Man's destiny is to earn his bread by industry, not by divination."—*R. D. Owen.*

#### XX.—*Spiritualists do not call up spirits.*

One of the stock would-be witticisms of the average newspaper cor-

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\* "The effect of levity in spiritual researches is not so fatal as that of dogmatic superstition; none the less its tendency is to preclude all valuable or satisfactory results. If we enter a church as we would crowd into a comic theatre, or kneel in prayer meeting as we would sit down to a game of cards, the exercises in either case will probably not tend much to edification. Spiritualism is not intended to make sport for graceless idlers at an evening party; and if to them it furnish but platitudes, inanities—buffooneries even—what is this but the natural result of misplaced merriment and thoughtless irreverence?"

"Yet even at such disadvantage, it has happened, from time to time, that Frivolity was startled out of her heedlessness, the poet's line being realised—

"And fools who came to scoff, remained to pray."



respondent with regard to Spiritualism, is to the effect that a future life would not be worth having if we are to be at the beck and call of every medium who desires his goods and chattels knocked about. The double insinuation involved, viz., that spirits can be invoked, and that they come simply to play pranks with our chairs and tables, would be absurd from the utter ignorance of the subject which is thereby displayed, were it not that this conception of Spiritualism is, thanks to the persistent misrepresentation of a portion of the press, very widely spread. In reply, I will simply state: (1) that Spiritualists do *not* invoke spirits. There is no necessity for so doing, seeing that we are surrounded by them, and oftentimes they are more anxious to communicate than those still living on the earth plane are willing to receive; (2) that Spiritualism does not consist in the knocking about of chairs and tables. Those who wish to know what does constitute Spiritualism have but to seek to find, to ask to be answered.

XXI.—*On certain erroneous ideas as to the conditions observed at séances.*

The following extract from Mr. Crookes's work concludes the present paper:—

"At the commencement I must correct one or two errors which have taken firm possession of the public mind. One is, that *darkness* is essential to the phenomena. This is by no means the case. Except where darkness has been a necessary condition, as with some of the phenomena of luminous appearance, and in a few other instances, everything recorded has taken place *in the light*. In the few cases where the phenomena noted have occurred in darkness, I have been very particular to mention the fact; moreover, some special reason can be shown for the exclusion of light, or the results have been produced under such perfect test conditions that the suppression of one of the senses has not really weakened the evidence.

"Another common error is, that the occurrences can be witnessed only at certain times and places—in the rooms of the medium, or at hours previously arranged; and, arguing from this erroneous supposition, an analogy has been insisted on between the phenomena called spiritual, and the feats of legerdemain by professional 'conjurers' and 'wizards' exhibited on their own platform, and surrounded by all appliances of their art.

"To show how far this is from the truth I need only say that, with very few exceptions, the many hundreds of facts I am prepared to attest, —facts which, to imitate by known mechanical or physical means, would baffle the skill of a Houdin, a Baseo, or an Anderson, backed with all the resources of elaborate machinery and the practice of years—have all taken place in my own house, at times appointed by myself, and under circumstances which absolutely precluded the employment of the very simplest instrumental aids.

"A third error is, that the medium must select his own circle of friends and associates at a séance; that these friends must be thorough believers in the truth of whatever doctrine the medium enunciates, and that conditions are imposed on any person present of an investigating

turn of mind, which entirely preclude accurate observation, and facilitate trickery and deception. In reply to this, I can state that, with the exception of the very few cases to which I have alluded in a previous paragraph, where—whatever might have been the motive for exclusiveness, it certainly was not the vailing of deception—I have chosen my own circle of friends, have introduced any hard-headed unbeliever whom I pleased, and have generally imposed my own terms, which have been carefully chosen to prevent the possibility of fraud. Having gradually ascertained some of the conditions which facilitate the occurrence of the phenomena, my modes of conducting these inquiries have generally been attended with equal, and, indeed, in most cases with more success than on other occasions, where, through mistaken notions of the importance of certain trifling observances, the conditions imposed might render less easy the detection of fraud.

“I have said that darkness is not essential. It is, however, a well-ascertained fact, that when the force is weak, a bright light exerts an interfering action on some of the phenomena. The power possessed by Mr. Home is sufficiently strong to withstand this antagonistic influence—consequently, he always objects to darkness at his sésances. Indeed, except on two occasions, when for some particular experiments of my own, light was excluded, everything which I have witnessed with him has taken place in the light. I have had many opportunities of testing the action of light, of different sources and colours, such as sunlight, diffused daylight, moonlight, gas, lamp, and candle-light, electric light from a vacuum tube, homogeneous yellow light, &c. The interfering rays appear to be those at the extreme end of the spectrum. . . .”

## CHAPTER IX.

### IMMORTALITY IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

“They do not die  
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
Nor change to us.”—*In Memoriam*.

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”—*Paul of Tarsus*.

THE primal mission of Spiritualism to the Christian Church and the world at large is the presentation of demonstrable proof of the reality of a spiritual world, and the continuity of individual existence after death. It achieves this end by supplementing the testimony of the past with present evidence, thus placing the doctrine of human immortality upon a basis that is strictly scientific, and one, withal, in thorough accord with the advanced thought of the age.

That the subject of immortality is one which all thinking minds regard with the most intense interest cannot, I think, be doubted, and yet, strange as it may appear, a state of passive unbelief is the characteristic attitude of all except a small minority.

I have already pointed out that the difficulty of modern culture with regard to this doctrine has mainly been the seeming impossibility of demonstrating that death is not the end of conscious being—that

the apparent possibilities of existence are not in reality, as they are seemingly, cut short by death and buried in the grave. Men have sought for evidence, but have sought in vain, until at length they have wearied of the search, and a feeling of its utter hopelessness has forced itself upon them.

And yet the highest hopes and the loftiest aspirations of the race have ever pointed towards the culmination of life on earth in a future state of being. Viewed theoretically, this is undoubtedly the only natural outcome of the capacities for culture and progression which have revealed themselves as part and parcel of human nature. Life here needs a fulfilment hereafter: the hopes of to-day, a fruition to-morrow: present aspirations, a future attainment.

This condition of passive unbelief has been mainly brought about and fostered by the materialistic teaching of Modern Science, which has also largely tinged with doubt and uncertainty the belief of the religious world. It is needless to reiterate, but I must run the risk of repetition in pointing out that the spirit of inquiry which desires an absolute and solid foundation on fact for the theories of the past, which has been so largely developed during the present century—often upsetting altogether, or modifying the dicta of times gone by—has, at last, forced its way into the religious world, and is inducing men to look more closely than before into the bases of their faith. Time-honoured and long-cherished beliefs are being sifted and examined by the sternly logical methods of physical science, and in the process not a few venerable articles of faith are, in the absence of evidence that appeals to the reason and senses, fading away.

Thus tested, the expressed belief of the religious world in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is found wanting. Why? Because science, accustomed to deal first with facts and then with theories—logically formulating the latter upon the unyielding testimony of the former—has (through the inability of the teachers of divine things to practically demonstrate the central fact of Christ's teaching) come to the conclusion that immortality is a vain delusion born of human hope and fancy alone.

To the science of to-day, the foundation truth of Christ's teaching—the fact of immortality—is still an unsolved problem. And even within the circles of religious thought its influence on every-day life as a practical living faith is of the slenderest kind. A large proportion of the members of our churches and chapels view death only with fear and apprehension, and to their earnest though doubting souls no gleam of light appears to illumine the darkness of the future—no sympathetic voice comes in response to their yearning cry.

I do not hesitate to affirm that materialistic ideas have obtained a greater hold upon the religious life of the day than is generally supposed. The fact of immortality may be accepted as part of one's creed, but it is no exaggeration to say that but few have a clear realisation of a life beyond the tomb, and fewer still receive it into their souls as an actual living power.

I am by no means unmindful of the fact, that through Jesus immortality and life were brought to light, and that in His resurrection

we have an earnest of our own. But, alas ! it cannot be denied that the testimony of the past fails to bring conviction to-day. The cry from many an one goes forth—"We have no knowledge—only faith ; and when most needed our faith has failed us." At the open grave, and notwithstanding the expressed "sure and certain hope of a joyful reunion" with those whose earthly tenements are buried out of sight, the crushing fear has come to not a few, that in reality they *know* nothing—hope and believe as they may ; that death may be the goal and end of life ; that as the loved ones pass from our yearning hearts, they vanish for ever from our sight.

And what does Spiritualism tell us concerning death ? It teaches us this, and not only teaches, but likewise proves, that the grave does not contain all that we love dearest and best ; that the tomb does not blot out the brightest and best hopes and aspirations of our race ; that the dead are gone, but not for ever ; that they have been returning to earth in all ages ; that they return to-day.

And so it surely is. The terror and misery are vanished : there is no room any longer for doubt, for none can deny the knowledge born of absolute demonstration. By the actual living presence of the spirit in our midst there is revealed unto us a life beyond the grave—a life in which the powers and capabilities of the human soul are undiminished, and in which the affections and aspirations have the fullest scope.

It was a similar demonstration that Jesus and His disciples furnished to the early Church, establishing the faith of the first converts by an appeal to both the reason and the senses. And if such proof were given in apostolic times, might we not naturally look with much assurance for similar tokens in these latter days, when our needs are so much greater ? If my argument has not sustained this view, I have assuredly failed somewhat in my purpose.

But to continue. Spiritualism steps in just at the moment when the drift of modern thought was carrying men daily farther and farther away from the old time-mooring places, and, by its phenomenal evidence, proves and substantiates the fast-fading belief in the spiritual nature and constitution of man. Out of the facts of Spiritualism has grown a living faith. Speculative belief in immortality has given place to a real and living communion with those who have passed beyond the bounds of time. No longer compelled to "evolve a future from our inner consciousness"—as one of the daily papers once put it—but basing our claim to belief on what we have heard with our ears, and seen with our eyes, and handled with our hands, the *possibility* of immortality no longer concerns us. The palpable demonstrations of well-attested facts—of facts made evident to the senses—supplies a certain conviction, and with this absolute assurance comes a joy and moral influence that no "cultivated *belief*" in immortality could or can supply. It was the same in the days of old. I have pointed out a few of the parallels existing between the days in which Jesus was proclaiming the nearness and actuality of the spiritual world and our own times, but I would point out yet another.

The culminating point of the mission and message of Jesus to the



world was the revelation of the duality and continuity of life. He plainly and palpably pointed out the true significance and meaning of death; and freeing the world from the bondage of superstition and the thralldom which a materialistic philosophy had woven around its life, He brought humanity face to face with one of the weightiest of weighty facts. By His resurrection, He not only answered the question of the ages as to the reality of a future life, but by establishing His identity and revealing Himself to the disciples as the same Guide, Instructor, and Friend as He had been to them during the days of His earthly pilgrimage, He proved, and that beyond all doubt, the fact of a personal individual immortality. He showed mankind how near Heaven was, how sweet the intercommunion between the two worlds. Realising it fully Himself, He pointed out a way whereby the disciples could realise it also. And now note the fruits born of such a faith. Were they not seen in His loving and gentle words and deeds, in the blessings which He bestowed on mankind, in the practical religion of daily life which He preached?

Through all His life, midst suffering, trial, and persecution, He had taught this great truth—being, in fact, its embodiment—and when, having passed through the jaws of death, He emerged a risen man, the proof was complete, and from the day of resurrection the law of immortality was demonstrated to the world.

Spiritualism in these later days is presenting the self-same open evidences, restoring in a measure to the Christian Church the proof she has so long failed to furnish. It shows that the real life is within—the man within the man—and that at death, when the envelope encasing the spiritual body has become worn out, this life is continued without a break. There is no interruption—no hiatus—no suspension, even for a moment, of the vital functions of the spirit. There may be change, but there can be no death. Nature knows no such law. No form of life that has ever existed has perished. As surely as the flowers that fade in the golden autumn days spring up in a myriad lovelier forms of life when the winter time has passed, so is the life of the spirit enmeshed in material form followed by another state of being adapted in every conceivable way to the new conditions with which it is surrounded. Not a single link is lost in the chain of existence. Where the thread is dropped here it is taken up in another stage of being.

Truly, there is no death. Though our friends pass from our sight we know they are not dead. We hear their voices, clasp their hands, and enjoy the same communion as of yore. The doors of the spiritual world that have been barred so long are not only set ajar, but opened wide, and from the “many mansions” of our Father’s home come the loved ones, with kindly messages and friendly greetings. Those we thought lost to us reassemble once again by the firesides and on the hearthstones that have seemed so full of desolation since the happy home circle was broken—broken, but, thank God! broken no more. The severed ties are joined again; the old friendships are renewed, and renewed never again to be set aside.

One of the sweetest consolations Spiritualism gives is the absolute assurance, not only that our loved ones are not dead, but that at times

they are with us. It brings home to us the same tangible realisation as that from which the early disciples derived such a joyful consciousness of the presence of their Risen Master. It was their mainspring of energy and consolation, and the reality of the feeling was manifest in all they said and did. They knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Friend and Teacher whom they had left on the Cross had in reality passed through the portals of the grave, unseathed and unhurt, and that in His so passing they had not lost the sweet companionship; that He was as much or even more their Friend and Guide than in the days that were past. The old and dear associations were not forgotten;—it was the same Jesus they had known on earth. They had no doubt of it.

And we ourselves can give a like testimony. Unto us, as to the early Church, is vouchsafed the communion of saints—the ministry of angels. To the orphan child comes the guiding angel-mother's hand, and she who has lost a darling babe feels that by her side stands a winsome spirit form, who in hours of solitude breathes a word of comfort from beyond the grave. The fear of death is vanquished: a gulf no longer divides us from those who have gone before. Thus, in the appointed time, we may well be contented to set our faces gravewards, in the joyful assurance that in so doing we are wending our way homewards by the self-same path which have been trodden by our fathers before us.

In this lies the real power of Spiritualism to uplift and elevate the race. And yet, the charge has been recorded that we enlist the sympathies of our kind by cruel and deceptive promises—promises which are unkept, unhallowed, and untrue. Such charges have been made, and, for aught we know, may again be preferred against us by those who profess to hold and teach the truth of God; and, in reply, we can only say, "The result is in His hands." We, as Spiritualists, and though branded as infidels by the Christian Church at large, have as great an interest in, and hold as dear, and cherish as much the truths exemplified and taught by Jesus of Nazareth as any other of His professed followers, and we can, moreover, truly say, the signs which should follow those that believe are at work and in operation in our midst.

The Christian Church to-day fails to arrest the attention or command the respect of the world to whom they preach: their words fall dead without the proof of works. A cry goes forth: "Where are the attesting signs? Where the cloud of witnesses? Where the ever-abiding presence of the Spirit of Truth?" And Echo only answers—"Where?" With sorrow be it said—but, nevertheless, the record is true and just—the power of the Spirit has forsaken the Church of to-day. No ray of light illumines the dark recesses of the future, for her eyes are shut to any light which has risen since the Master walked the earth in mortal guise and form, as though He were not as compassionate and tender-hearted now as then! Little is His promise of sending the Comforter to guide us into all truth heeded—maybe we cannot bear the Spirit's presence even yet. Let us look to it that we bear in mind and live out the lessons He taught us, endeavouring to

realise and catch the spirit of the Gentle Nazarene, and which never yet failed to uplift and benefit mankind.

That such charges as that of which I have spoken are unfounded I firmly believe. Spiritualism has and does bring comfort to the sorrowing and broken-hearted. Transporting us from the homes here to the homes beyond the bounds of Death, it reveals the delightful stir of human life—of life new in form—with fresh pleasures, associations, and delights, but, nevertheless, a life in which we see the same dear faces as of yore, though beaming with a new gladness, and hear the old familiar voices welcoming us, bidding us dry our tear-stained eyes and sorrow no more.

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A final word and I have done. Much that I have written will be new and strange to many under whose notice this little book may come. To such I would say : Judge not hastily or harshly, nor jump to rash conclusions, but read carefully and weigh well—"If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought ; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it."







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JULY—DECEMBER, 1881.

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